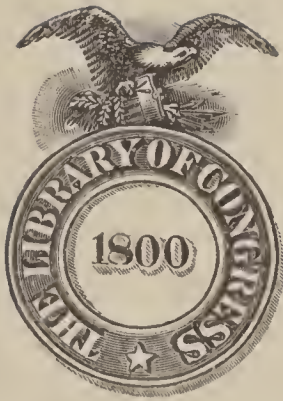


PULPIT  
SKETCHES





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# PULPIT SKETCHES

BY

REV. A. A. LAMBERT

# MISSIONARY

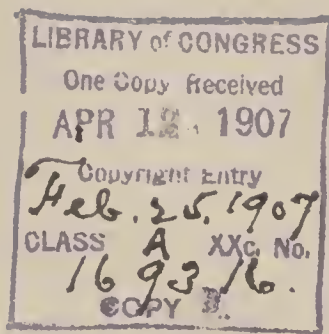
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*Bishop of Davenport, Iowa*

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TO MY BROTHER PRIESTS THESE  
SKETCHES ARE DEDICATED  
BY THE AUTHOR  
*Father Lambert, Missionary*

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Note—If you should wish me to give a mission, apply to me at Davenport Cathedral, Davenport, Iowa, or 589 Millard Ave., Chicago, Ill.



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## Introduction

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*Having preached for so many years, and having been requested by many of the clergy to write sketches or plans of sermons, I give the following pages to my brother priests, hoping they will be a help to them in the great work of preaching the word of God. Will you, my brother priests, allow me, in these introductory lines, to point out some reasons why our preaching does not always produce the desired effect, or why people do not like to hear sermons.*

*How natural we are in our conversations and dealings with others, but as soon as we go into the pulpit we are not ourselves, we are not natural. We seem to assume something like another character, whether through nervousness or an assumed air of authority and dignity. We talk, we speak, we recite, we declaim, we make great efforts; but alas, it is mostly talking, speaking, recitation, declamation, in an assumed character, not like ourselves, and above all, not from the heart. Such a sermon cannot be earn-*

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*est and heartfelt, and no effect is produced except to tire the audience.*

*Therefore, let us be natural, and above all, let us speak from the heart, from conviction, with persuasion, and our sermons will be effective. A young priest, especially, is very apt to imagine that his first sermon must be a specimen of great power and eloquence, something extraordinary, most astonishing, an original masterpiece never heard before, and many an older priest is influenced by some impression, similar to this, when there is a question of preaching. This idea is very apt to rob our sermons or instructions of that beautiful simplicity and heartfelt conviction which makes the sermon so instructive and carries with it complete persuasion.*

*Let us go to the pulpit, not in the sublimity of language, or to preach ourselves, but to preach Christ with simplicity and humility, with earnestness, every word coming straight from the heart.*

*Many sermons are merely language, pleasing, perhaps, for a while, but they are devoid of thought or solid food for the soul. Such sermons are merely beating the air, and produce no good whatsoever. May the Lord save us from long sermons. Experience proves beyond a doubt that they tire the people, and hence the congregation avoids going to the*

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*Masses at which the preaching takes place. Let us say something very good and practical, and say it well, but let it be short. Let us create a hunger and thirst in our people by causing them to say that they would like longer sermons. This is the best proof that they appreciate what you say. To preach a successful sermon we must clearly grasp our subject. Be sure that you know what to say and how to say it, and then preach. Many will talk for a long time, and yet say nothing; the audience leaves the Church without having received any spiritual food, which is the object of preaching.*

*Every one is not gifted with elocutionary powers or a fine appearance or naturally attractive manners, gifts which are, no doubt, a great help to keep an audience; and yet they may be a hindrance to the spiritual welfare of the audience. In a good sermon the preacher, to a great extent, is overlooked by his earnestness, by speaking from the heart, by showing his audience that he speaks from the inmost conviction of his heart, feeling what he says, and preaching for the welfare of souls.*

*I need not add that our lives should be blameless and exemplary; that we should practice what we preach; otherwise our preaching is in vain. The good life of a pastor is the most impressive, influ-*

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*entia and eloquent sermon he can possibly preach. Preaching is divine work, and without God's blessing all our preaching is worthless. After we have fully grasped our subject, and our hearts have fully realized its moral grandeur and importance, let us soak that subject in a fervent prayer to God, especially to the Holy Ghost, through the intercession of our Immaculate Mother.*

*Under no circumstances be personal. Whenever you are personal, especially in money matters, you do more harm than good; you cause bitter feelings, and you drive the people away from the Church. A good pastor should be above all this. By praising those who do their duty, and ignoring the negligent, you will indirectly, but forcibly, impress the negligent.*

*Be very careful about visions and apparitions and so-called wonderful or miraculous anecdotes. Our words are the words of the anointed and legalized ministers of Christ. We have plenty of solid matter for faith and piety without losing time in preaching upon subjects upon which the Church has not set her sanction, or which are not found in the fathers or doctors of the church. A word about written sermons. By these I mean that the discourse is written out in full, learned by heart, word for word, and*



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*spoken word for word. Unless it is a lecture, which is read in public, I do not think it advisable to write out a sermon in full, and learn it by heart word for word. It is certainly good and praiseworthy to write a sermon, but to learn it word for word, and, thus memorized, speak it word for word, will take away a great deal of the effect of the sermon. Besides it is almost impossible for most priests to prepare such a sermon every week. Some good priests have a complete set of sermons for the whole year, but unless they fill their minds and hearts with their subject again, especially if they preach these same sermons several times they will grow careless, and the unction and heartfelt emotion of the sermon is lost. As I have said, let there be, every time we are called upon to preach, careful preparation; let us gather clear and correct ideas; let us mature them and pray, then preach, and preach every sermon as if it were the last and only one which you are going to preach; put your whole soul into it. By doing this, the practice of preaching will be acquired; we will grow to be at home in the pulpit. Brother priests, let me exhort you with my whole heart and soul to read both the letter and the Gospel every Sunday distinctly and with great reverence and devotion. Very often the letter and the Gospel are read very quickly and care-*

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lessly, as if they were of no importance. The man who is about to preach is, perhaps, nervous, or his mind is so full of his sermons, afraid he might forget. Dear brother priest, your sermon can never equal, much less surpass, the words of Jesus or those of his Apostles.

In every sketch there are plenty of suggestions or points. Use what suits you, but make them your own and preach them in your own way. Be natural and in earnest. When any accident or extraordinary fact happens, if possible make use of it as a comparison or illustration. In other words, let Gospel truth come fresh from a zealous and earnest soul with a fresh or new dress for a supernatural motive, and the sermon will be effective. Our study should be, not to preach new doctrine, or minimize or compromise. Far from it. Our aim and sincere effort should be to preach the Gospel, pure and simple and clear, but explained by making use of physical facts that happen before us, easily understood. In preaching show your hatred for sin, but pity and mercy for the sinner. Avoid all exaggerations; never overdo it. It is very easy to scare people—that is, to produce nervous excitement. This lasts for a short time only, and there is no conviction, but merely a passing feeling. How many priests paint well the evil of drink,

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of dancing, and many other subjects by exaggerations, false impressions, thus only exciting the imagination and causing some nervous excitement. God will never bless such work, for it is not His; God despises false or exaggerated statements. The effects of such preaching are not lasting. Remember that in many cases of persons who fall, there is a great deal of ill-health, prejudices of early training, false impressions, evil surroundings, and above all, strong passion. A general sketch or plan which is easily developed and can be used very readily on many an occasion when called upon to preach, is as follows:

1. *What does God think of this? How does He act upon the world and its people?*

2. *What does Jesus Christ think of this? What did He say about this, and how did He act?*

3. *What did our Blessed Mother do?*

4. *The Apostles, the great saints and doctors of the Church, the martyrs and all those who lead holy lives, who are in heaven, canonized by the Church.*

5. *How did they live, for their actions speak more eloquently than their words.*

6. *What do the good people of our day say? How do they act?*

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7. Whom shall we follow, the former or the wicked?

8. All the noble-minded and pure-hearted are with God and Christ and His Blessed Mother and the saints. Let us make our choice.

As parish priest, in your instructions and sermons on Sundays and feast days, never speak directly to the non-Catholics. Your first duty is to make your own people good, practical Catholics by giving them clear explanations of Catholic doctrine, and leading them to the practice of what you preach. This will keep the fervent in the faith, and strengthen them, and bring back the fallen ones. If we, by our ministry accomplish this, there will be no non-Catholics. The good lives of our people will convert them. Of course, if a priest has special services for them, like a mission, or a course of lectures or instructions, he is to be encouraged in the work, but let our first care be our own. Brother priests, let us not talk *AT* the congregation, but talk *TO* them, as ministers of Jesus Christ. In connection with these sketches use a Bible concordance. There are two very good ones written in English—one by Father Vaughan, the other by Father Cox.

Finally, allow me to say that my earnest wish is that you will preach these sketches with the same



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*feeling with which I am writing them. I sincerely aim at God's honor and glory, at the salvation of souls, and thus to try and save my own. Should these sketches prove acceptable to my brother priests, other volumes will be published. The next will be sketches on the Gospels of the Sundays, one volume for forty hours' devotion, and others for giving missions, triduums, novenas, retreats to priests, sketches for the festivals of the year, meditation book for priests, for religious. They are the outcome of thirty to forty years of experience, and I most willingly will spend the remainder of my days in publishing them if they will do good. Any criticism will be most cheerfully received. Success to my dear brother priests in the great work of saving souls.*

*THE AUTHOR.*



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## First Sunday of Advent

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SUGGESTION: We as priests, as pastors of souls, should be more ready and anxious to call our people and arouse them from their spiritual sleep—which is so dangerous—than good parents are to call their slothful or negligent children every morning from their beds. At most they are sluggish and slothful—are apt to lose their position—but we who are responsible for their souls, how anxious and zealous we should be. Now in the words of the Apostle—this is the proper time to awaken them from their sleep, which may be fatal at any moment.

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Text from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans:  
*“Arise from sleep.”*

We hate very much to be aroused when we are in a sound sleep. To be disturbed then is very *unpleasant*, annoying. We get cross and blame people for awakening us.

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We generally try to sleep as long as we can, provided we can get in time for *work* or *business*.

Of course it is not our intention to sleep too long. Oh no, we go and lie down—we gradually fall asleep—and become forgetful of everything around us.

Hours pass and there we are, soundly, deeply asleep. Morning comes and they awaken us—it is time to rise. It is daylight or the sun will soon rise.

Even then how we dislike to *rise*. Even then when *we* should rise we try to delay as long as possible. A few minutes more until we get to business, by rushing, hurrying, barely in time—often too late. What a slothful man or woman we are.

If unforeseen accidents should happen—a fire close by—in our own home; a burglar trying to break in; we are frightened, we leap from our beds. Oh, we thank the good relative or friend who called us and saved our life.

Many people are in the habit of leading so slothful a life—call it a habit of laziness—which

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makes them slaves to a feeling of sloth and self-indulgence.

We see this habit very often in children. Father or mother have the greatest trouble in awakening their children—boys and girls—they have to be called time and again in order to get them ready for school or work. How anxious their good parents are. We find them calling, entreating, coaxing these lazy children to rise from sleep.

The mother: "*Oh you will be late—now do get up—you will lose your position.*" And what I say about children, very often holds good for grown-up people.

Many while thus sleeping are dreaming and many wonderful phantasms pass before their imagination. How real, how distinct. It is life for them and when they awake—alas! it is all gone—it was an empty dream. What emptiness—what vanity.

For the majority, life is but sleep and dreams. They never awaken unless death calls them to awaken in the other world.

Many have called, and do call, sleep the image of death. Explain why. Therefore St. Paul

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speaks so clearly about the spiritual sleep, or the death of the soul.

Now, brethren, look on the whole world and you will find thousands of sleepers, with the sleep of eternal death, to which St. Paul refers.

Let us apply this to the supernatural and perhaps we will find that we are *asleep*—*dead* to the supernatural and that we are satisfied with leading a life of vanity, of dreams of things that are *not real*.

The great Apostle says: "Now is the time to rise from sleep." And why? To-day, the first Sunday of Advent—the dawn that preceded the rising of the great and only true light of the world—Jesus Christ—who came to enlighten every human being who cometh into this world—being in other words, Advent, the time to prepare for Christmas.

I need not tell you what you have heard time and again about the moral darkness—that is, the state of the minds and hearts of those who lived before Christ—idolatry, lust, drunkenness, might was right, deifying the fruit of their unrestrained passions.

For four thousand years mankind lived in this darkness. No wonder, then, that the great Apostle



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called upon the first Christians to rise from sleep, as Jesus Christ, the light of the world, had come.

Brethren, do you see that good, anxious mother, with her heart full of anxiety, stand near the bedside of her careless, slothful son, sleeping away his life,—calling, as I told you—entreating—reasoning.

Ah, brethren, the ministers of Christ are here to repeat to you the earnest appeal of the apostle, for to-day, many, very many, are sleeping the sleep of sloth, neglect and indifference.

And let me add that we Christians of to-day are more culpable than those who lived before Christ, for they had not the light of the world—Jesus Christ.

We, with the anxiety of a father, devotion and love for the salvation of your souls, every year, during this Holy season—Advent, the preparation for Christmas—call upon you in the name of God, of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, of our holy mother, the Church. We, acting in accordance with the spirit and teachings of your church, having at heart your welfare, both spiritual and temporal, to open your eyes and rise from that state of sleep, of dark-

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ness and of sin, in which you may be slumbering at the risk of losing all—your immortal souls.

O beloved ones in Christ Jesus, when I as your pastor, look around in my congregation and see so many souls, confided to my care, do I not find, can I not find some, perhaps many, who are asleep with the sleep of which the Apostle speaks—persons who have practically fallen away from the Church. *No Easter duty*, no mass on Sundays or holy days, never any prayer, never helping the Church. Even worse than all, giving bad example.

Souls so precious in the sight of God—consider my duty towards you. What must I say? What shall I say? Will you suggest to me what to say? Place yourself in my position and with my responsibilities. Am I not simply doing my duty in deploring any sloth or neglect which I clearly find in our midst, among those whom God has confided to my care, and for whom I shall have to answer on the day of Judgment? Shall I keep silence when the great Apostle tells his helpers in the work of saving souls to insist, to urge, even to rebuke, yes with patience, but also with zeal, those who are careless?

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Which is your great or principal fault? What is the cause of your sleep? Examine your conscience and remove that cause during this holy season.

If you are aware of any glaring fault existing in your congregation, call their attention to it in a very careful and prudent manner, so as not to give *offense*, but instruction, and for the simple reason that you are anxious to see them perfect Christians.

Invite all to unite in prayer—to obtain the spirit which filled the souls of the patriarchs and prophets who lived before Christ and longed for the coming of Jesus. They prayed, they raised their eyes and hands and hearts to heaven, leading holy lives in fasting and penance.

Brethren, will you continue to sleep or slumber, will you let me call you in vain, until death springs upon, until perhaps a fatal accident will lay you low, gasping, unconscious in the jaws of death?

Oh, the moral darkness of four thousand years that covered the earth before Christ! We have the fullness of the light. Let us therefore prepare well for Christmas. Let all sin and scandal disappear from our midst, so Christmas will bring to us joy and happiness—not for this life alone, but for life eternal.

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## Second Sunday of Advent

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Letter to the Romans: "*That with one mind and one mouth you may glorify God.*"

SUGGESTION: We should *be one in God*, so that what we think and say of one another should be the fruit of Christian charity.

The greatest law is the law of Charity. Explain it—"Love thy neighbor as thyself," etc.

The observance of that law shows whether we are Christians—that is, acceptable to God or not. Without charity we cannot please God.

That charity of Christ, as the apostle tells us, should be in our mind and in our mouth, so that our mouth will speak from the abundance of our heart.

We should esteem our neighbor as the image of God, as our brother or sister, in Jesus Christ.

Therefore no rash judgments and above all, no uncharitable remarks, no evil insinuations, no gossip about our neighbor.

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It is well said in the Great Book: "A man who does not offend in speech is perfect."

The words we speak are the *expression* of our thoughts and of the feelings of our hearts.

How careful, therefore, we should be in speaking about our neighbor.

Gossips, who bridle not their tongue, have no religion, for St. James says: "If any one bridle not his tongue," etc.

We are so particular about our being accused of any injustice, even in a very small amount, and yet the injustice we do our neighbor by gossiping or uncharitable and especially slanderous remarks, is far greater than stealing.

The Holy Ghost tells us "that a good name is more valuable than riches."

The law of justice requires that restitution shall be made, even for the smallest amount, otherwise we shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now, more so, does the law of justice require restitution, if we have injured our neighbor in his good name.



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It is so easy to injure our neighbor, by insinuations, or by gossip—those who hear it repeat it, add to it—and so it grows worse and worse.

The harm done by uncharitable conversation spreads—it ruins families (separates husband from wife), causes dissensions in the family between parents and children, between neighbors, between pastors and their congregations.

It is like a prairie fire—running wild and devouring everything with which it comes in contact.

If one steals dollars and cents, *a hundred* dollars returned for a hundred stolen, will make restitution for a dollar is a dollar; but in the case of gossip, the amount of restitution is ever on the increase, therefore it is more difficult to make restitution.

If a murderer has taken the life of another and dies on the scaffold—life for life—there is restitution.

If I am murdered by the assassin, I get the sympathy of all. Not so if I am slandered. I am injured and persecuted and the evil tongues are stabbing me, killing me by inches—and there is no restitution.

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Self respect should move you never to be guilty of that ugly fault, for

It destroys, in those to whom you talk, all confidence in you.

Generally gossips are guilty of the same faults about which they accuse their neighbor.

By talking about your neighbors you reveal your own faults and try to hide them behind those of your neighbor.

You show that you are filled with jealousy and spite, the two great sources of gossip.

Others will talk about you as you talk about them, for with the same measure you measure them, they will measure you.

Therefore, stop and correct this great evil. Friends, I beg of you, if this fault is in our midst, banish it forever. Let us be as the apostle says: "With one mind and one mouth serving God."

Let us bridle our tongue—let our conversation be full of charity.

If in the past we have been guilty, let us try not only to stop that fault, but to do our best to undo the

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harm we have done, by taking back what we have said, inasmuch as we can, then speak well of one another.

Study your neighbor's good qualities, overlook his defects and pray for him—that God may bless him.

Holy Scripture says: “Let the word of a friend die in your heart.” Well, if you should hear anything about your neighbor, let it die in your heart—do not whisper it even to any one.

Above all, never be a tale-bearer.

Brethren, let prayer go to God from all our united hearts and mouths, that our dear Father in Heaven may look down upon us—his beloved and loving children.

May the charity of Jesus Christ dwell in your minds and hearts and mouths, is the constant prayer of your pastor.

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## Third Sunday of Advent

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Reading is taken from the letter which St. Paul wrote to the Philippians. I'll read this letter for you. In it he says: *Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say, rejoice.*

PLAN: Joy is the fruit of happiness. Happiness is peace, the peace of which the apostle speaks when he says: "And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding." Keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus forever.

Happiness, where can you be found—tell me ye heavens—O, earth—O, angels of God—O, men here on earth—tell me where can I find happiness.

Our hearts yearn for it, long for it and we look for it day and night and always; and alas! we often think we have found it, only to be deceived and disappointed.

Every human being tries to solve the great problem of life. What is it? To be happy. Everyone that ever lived and lives today—you and I—we are

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ever searching for happiness—all we do and think of is—to look for happiness.

Why build our home nice and comfortable? It is to be happy. Why do we toil—keep them neat and clean and furnish them? To be comfortable, which is only another word for happiness.

Why do we work? To make a living, to lay by some means—to live nicely—to have some wealth. What does all this mean but to be happy?

Why do we look for nice neighbors, and good and, if possible, wealthy neighbors and high society? Amusements—pleasure—gratification—ease. Oh, in order to enjoy life, in other words to be happy.

And why do we do all this without having been taught? It naturally comes from our nature.

Do you not see it clearly? God made us for *eternal*, true, real happiness, and we cannot help acting, following that inborn and beautiful tendency of our nature.

And yet, although every human being, young and old, look for and seek for happiness, why is it that so few really find it? It is a great pity that the millions never reach it because they do not look for it where alone it can be found.



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Nothing finite, *created*, nothing which is in this world—honor — pleasure — wealth — can satisfy a mind and heart which have been made for the infinite.

And yet the majority of men try to do this impossible thing; and all who try it, fail and make life simply wreck and ruin.

Examples: Kings, emperors, courtiers, ambitious people not happy, although they imagined they would be, before they reached the object of their ambition.

People in daily life—they have a plan to make money, to buy a nice home or a fine farm, to gain honor or esteem, to be ahead of their neighbors, to gain the heart of some one, to be prominent on the stage, or even in the pulpit, and when they reach the end of their efforts they are not happy, there is still something more they want.

The human heart *never* says it is enough. Millionaires try to increase their wealth, no matter how rich they are. Ambitious men and women try to go higher still and yet no one of them has ever been really happy.

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Alexander was not happy, though he had conquered the then known world. Poor Solomon in all his glory, the man who had never refused his heart any wish, as he stood in his full manhood, over 80 years old—had to acknowledge that “All is vanity—save to serve God.”

Go and find a man who has accomplished every thing he could in this world, and unless he served God, he must admit that he is not really happy.

In business, in worldly matters, how quickly do we learn and take lessons from our neighbors. Do we engage in any business which has proved unprofitable to all those who have tried it? *Oh, no.*

Why then be so blind in the great affair of our salvation, in the finding of true happiness? Why not imitate Christ and His saints and find not only temporal, but eternal happiness?

Here self-conceit blinds us. We think we are smart. Oh, we know of others, but we are not going to do as they do. We will turn to real happiness in time, but for the present, we must first provide for this world.

How foolish, when our Lord so distinctly says: “Seek ye first the Kingdom,” etc.

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How few people know real happiness. They have never tasted real happiness. Like savages who have never tasted any real good and well prepared foods.

How it brings peace and security to both the mind and heart of the good Christian, how they are really happy and nothing can take away their happiness, for as the apostle says: "It is the happiness, the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding;" and it keeps your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus forever.

Brethren, we have been born for nobler things than the fleeting show of this world. Raise your minds and hearts on high—live for God—seek for happiness where alone it can be found. Be no more a child or baby, who looks for toys and trinkets, only to take hold of them and then throw them away, to look for others, which again are thrown aside.

Squander not your precious time in trifles, but be men—Christians—who look up to God and live for Him, thus finding true happiness which shall bring true and lasting joy forever.

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## Fourth Sunday of Advent

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Reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians: "Let me call your attention to his words—what are the judgments of men: *There is but one who judgeth and judgeth rightly—that is God.*"

PLAN: How rash are the judgments of men! How little importance we should attach to them, but fill our minds and guide our lives by the judgments or the word of God.

Men judge from the exterior, impression at first sight, judge others by themselves. Their judgments are rash, not the fruit of reflection.

Their natural likes and dislikes are the standard upon which they base their judgments.

They go by first impressions—looks—manner of acting—they do not stop to think. They will not allow for surroundings and circumstances.

They have some idea of goodness or greatness. It is worldly—dress, *fashion*, the home, and its sur-

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roundings, in fact they judge their neighbor not by what he is, but by his surroundings.

It is all outward and the mind and the heart, no matter how well balanced or cultured, are not taken into consideration. They are the feathers of the bird—its nice appearance, but not the bird itself.

The world goes further. We judge people by the way in which they speak to us—how they flatter and praise us—by what they do to us and for us—their kindness, their goodness to us; in other words, they are good or bad just as they like us and are good to us or overlook us. It is self-love and moral blindness which is the cause of our rash judgments of our neighbors.

The world judges even the word of God—the doctrine of the Church—the doctrine which I have to preach to you, and which I try to preach to you. Oh, wouldn't I be a lovely and agreeable speaker if I were to find out what you like, what doctrine would suit you best, what would flatter you, and yet I cannot take into consideration whether people like the doctrine or not.

All this shows that we cannot rely on our judgments and especially in our own case, and therefore



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the apostle tells us so clearly about the judgments of men. Let me read again what he says: "But to me, it is a very small thing," etc., words of to-day's reading.

Yes, he that judgeth me is the Lord. The apostle advises us to wait till his coming and not to judge others and even ourselves according to our impressions and individual notions.

For our judgments in most cases are *rash*, that is without sufficient reason or grounds and whenever we judge in this way we usurp the right of God—who alone can judge us correctly.

Therefore the judgments of people in general should not influence our actions, for if we are influenced by them, we become slaves of human respect.

The word of God—the teaching of holy mother Church, these should influence our sayings, our actions, our lives; for then we shall be guided by the judgment of God.

The world is ruled by talk—by fashion—by human respect and therefore by slavery.

We should be free with the freedom of the children of God, abide by his word and do not allow

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yourselves to be influenced by the false and rash judgments of the world.

What a blessing it is for those who do not abide by the false and rash judgments and sayings of this world, that God will not judge us according to their opinions or notions, but by his own infallible and just judgment.

He will completely upset and reverse the judgments of this world and will give judgment to each one of us just as we deserve.

He will not ask the opinion of the world, nor take into account the foolish and rash sayings of the world. On the contrary, he will severely condemn them.

What a great triumph it will be for all those who did not allow themselves to be influenced by this world, but judged the world by the light of the Gospel.

How the good enjoy during life, the perfect freedom of the children of God, as they are not slaves of the world and its vanities.

Therefore, the good Christian does not care what the world thinks or says about him, but endeavors

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to see himself in the light of God's judgment by applying to himself the law of God.

For him there is the standard by which he judges, fully convinced that the world and all that is in it will pass away, but the word or judgment of God shall never pass away.

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## Christmas

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Come let us adore.

The feast which Holy Mother Church places before us to-day is so beautiful and charming that words cannot do justice to its loveliness and grandeur.

Do you think that I would preach to you on any particular subject to-day—when Jesus lies in the manger—and by his irresistible practical sermon, which he preaches from that manger, gives more light to our minds and strength to our wills and love to our hearts than my or all the greatest efforts of the most eloquent speakers could produce.

Brethren, I ask of you, Come and adore. In that humble and abandoned stable there is a light that never was seen on earth before—the true light of the world, Jesus Christ.

The son of God comes to save us. Here is his first sermon. His pulpit is the manger. His eloquence is the eternal silence of the divine nature.

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You must pray and study. It is the masterpiece of God's love and generosity to man. It is the personality of the son of God, clothed in our human nature. It is not a magnificent piece of art like a painting, colored on canvas, which by the magic touch of divine inspiration has become *immortalized*, nor like the marble block brought into life by the precise and delicate touches of the chisel in the hands of a noble mind and a warm heart. It is the reality, no imitation. It is divine art in its highest and loftiest *idea*, the divine enshrined in the human. Manhood encircling Godhead, harmoniously blended into one person—the second person of the adorable trinity—Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

He is there in the form of the babe, they call him the babe of Bethlehem, the most lovely child that was ever born into this world. Do not expect me to tell its beauty. Angels could not do justice to it and far be it from me to make the attempt.

There lies the fulfillment of the promise of God to man: "A saviour shall be born." There is the reason of the angels singing their glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men of good will.



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Just as the earth was dark and void before the Creator made light to dispel darkness, and bring life and power to earth, so was the moral world in gloom and utter darkness—but there lies the sun of justice—the light of the world.

Here is the most eloquent irresistible sermon that was ever preached—a God man—but where is he born—in a humble and an abandoned stable. He lies in a very poor manger, his bed is straw; no cradle to rock him. Rocking the infinite can only be done by a most pure, loving woman, chosen by the Almighty himself. Her arms and her warm heart, strong with the impulses of divine love, made perfect by the birth of her infant Jesus, constitute the true resting place of the Son of God.

No palace, no ordinary home, but both manger and stable, are the proofs of Jesus, who preaches the value of poverty by his example.

His humility—there it is—poorer than the poorest. He there so eloquently practices what he preached later on. When invited, take the lowest place. Was there ever a child born under circumstances so poor and humble.

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Rich and poor, come, *adore*, pray and study and drink in deeply the great eternal truths preached by the infant Jesus from his great pulpit, the manger.

Watch! Do you see that sweet, charming girl of about 16, wrapt in contemplation, gazing with eyes full of love, her young bosom heaving with emotion and holy joy? Do you want me to tell who she is? Do you look at her countenance, her beauty is more of heaven than of earth. See the sweet face of the babe and again her face. Do you see the perfect resemblance? Ah, mother and child. O, the sublime word, *Mother*, but the mother of Jesus, the mother of God.

O, if she would tell us what her young motherly heart feels at this moment—but no, dear mother of Jesus, there is no language that could possibly express the sublime emotions of your heart—they can be felt, but not expressed.

Forget not the holy Joseph. See him in deep adoration. He gazes upon the infant and his heart goes forth to it. It is Thabor for him and from the babe his eyes meet those of his immaculate spouse, the Virgin, the two greatest treasures that heaven

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gave to earth and God the Father has confided them to his care—O, Holy night.

This feast, brethren, is essentially one of generosity. God gives us himself in the personality of his divine Son in our form. He is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.

No wonder then, that Christian people, in order to remind one another of the generosity of God towards mankind, are in the habit of giving Christmas gifts to those who are dear and near to them.

Brethren, my Christmas gift to you is Jesus of Bethlehem, of yesterday and to-day and forever. Bethlehem is right here upon the altar. There are the swaddling clothes, the simple, pure altar linens that enshroud *the sacred species*, the same Jesus who was laid in the manger of Bethlehem by his beloved mother. Thank God that I am a priest, your father in God, that can bring Jesus from heaven here upon this altar, for your spiritual and temporal welfare. Yes, I wish you a thousand merry Christmases, not only here but forever in heaven.

But friends, let not this beautiful feast pass without giving more sincere and heartfelt thanks.

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First to God, the Father, for sending Jesus in our midst, etc.

To Jesus, our Saviour, for coming to us, etc.

To the Blessed Virgin, his Mother, for bringing Jesus to us through her divine maternity.

To holy Joseph, their protector their guardian, the spotless spouse of Mary.

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## Sunday Within the Octave of Christmas

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The reading is from the letter which St. Paul wrote to the Galatians. He says: "But when the fullness of the time was come God sent His Son."

The splendor, the grandeur and joy of Christmas are yet around us. We live in that bright light like the shepherds who were so astonished at the unusual brightness, and therefore the Apostle writes to the first Christians when the fullness of time was come, God sent His Son. Let us try to appreciate this great gift and profit by it.

God from all eternity knew all and planned all. God has appointed every detail of creation, as well as of Redemption. God in His eternal plan has taken into consideration His honor and glory—the general good of creation—and especially of man, whose nature He came to assume, and by assuming it to draw unto Himself the whole of creation.

Christ has taught us that not a leaf shall fall from a tree, not a hair from our head, without the per-



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mission of our heavenly father. So minutely does God know all and see all and ordain all, in His infinite and, therefore, infallible wisdom.

Creation no doubt sprang into existence and time came with it just at the moment when God willed it to come, and the physical and moral creations rolled on in time and with time, man by sin bringing ruin and destruction.

Before creation was ever wrought by God's power Redemption had been planned. In Paradise, where sin spoiled the beauty of creation, to sinful man, Redemption was promised, and what are years for God's eternity, and God had decreed that when He promised it there would roll by thousands of years before He would fulfill that promise.

It is to this the Apostle refers when he says: When the fullness of time had come, the great chasm of time elapsing from the creation to the redemption had been filled by so many years or centuries just as God had planned it from all eternity.

Now, says the Apostle, God sent His Son; in other words, the time has come and God fulfills His promise. God comes to us—a child is born *unto us*.

Why, then, did the prophets and patriarchs pray

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for the redeemer to come—to what purpose were all their prayers and supplications when God had determined to wait till the fullness of time?

God planned and in that divine plan He took into consideration all the prayers and supplications of the past, and the fullness of time was determined by their requests.

He planned for us to be brought into this world—not during the time of darkness, which preceded the sending of His Son—but in the fullness of time, when His divine Son would be in this world, so that we can enjoy the brilliant and unerring light for our minds and infallible guidance for our wills.

We are the chosen ones of God. Prophets and patriarchs have longed for his day—and they did not see it; but to us have been revealed the treasures and fullness of the divine light of God.

By sending His Son into this world He gives us a divine model—the type of the elect.

He gives us all the merits of that beloved Son.

He places at our disposal through His infallible Church all the truth which His Father had commanded Him to preach.

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Through the powers which He conferred on that same Church. He regenerates us and gives supernatural strength through the Sacraments.

So called trials and misfortunes become a source of merit and reward.

He dwells amongst us by indwelling His Church, and especially by the perpetual presence upon our altars in the Holy Eucharist.

He becomes practically one with us, raising our fallen nature unto His own—that of the God-man.

Life becomes worth living as we follow His divine teaching and make use of all the means He has placed at our disposal.

Therefore, in Christ, in the Son whom the Father sent, we have the greatest treasure or gift that God has ever given to us, and therefore—as St. Paul says—I glory in Jesus Christ, all knowledge outside of that of Christ is worthless.

Therefore, brethren, the great effort of the Church in all her teachings and practices is to impress upon your minds and hearts, Christ Jesus, the Son whom the Father has sent in the fullness of time.

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## New Year's Day

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This day is a most favorable and appropriate occasion for you as pastor-father of your congregation to express your very best and heartfelt wishes for their spiritual and temporal welfare. Therefore, in a few well chosen words thank God for His many blessings and invoke His special blessing for the New Year for all your parishioners, especially those who have been so faithful in the past.

On this day, where do you meet your people so dear to your heart? In the Church—at the foot of God's altar.

Review the past year—God's blessings who inspired the fervent and the generous—to enable me to make such and such improvements in the Church, the school, the parish house, to establish an asylum, hospital, whatever good was done.

The spiritual welfare or standing of the parish: Last year so many hundreds or thousands—confessions, communions, novenas, *Forty hours' devo-*

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*tion*, mission, so many children made their first communion, so many received the Sacrament of Confirmation, so many children were baptized, so many young people were solemnly united in the holy bonds of matrimony.

I cannot forget the few or many who died during the past year, whose remains we laid to rest in hallowed ground, and whose souls no doubt we followed beyond the grave by our prayers and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Let your deepest sympathy go forth to those who have lost a near or dear relative or friend. They have their New Year's Day in heaven.

Now, my most earnest thanks to God for all these great favors, but also my most fervent prayer goes up to-day to the throne of Goodness and Mercy, that the new year may be more fruitful in blessings and favors than the past has been.

For many or most of you I have but one wish to express, namely, that you may persevere in the good and holy lives which you are leading—the good example you are giving—and in your generosity which you practice so liberally towards the Church and the good of the parish.



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And here in the name of the congregation I return public thanks to that generous, kind hearted gentleman or lady, whose name I need not mention, who donated (whatever it may be) for the Church or School.

I return heartfelt thanks to my good people who were so punctually and steadily at mass on Sundays and holidays, who frequented the Sacraments so regularly, who are members—I mean practical members—of the Altar Society, of the league of the Sacred Heart, of the temperance society, etc.

As St. Paul says, that those who serve at the altar, should live by it, I certainly return very sincere thanks to all my good people who paid their Church dues so regularly without being asked—who are ever ready to help their pastor or the Church whenever there is need, and on this point, dear friends, let me say *one* word to-day. It is very disagreeable and distasteful to call for money at the altar of God.

And to those of my people who are not doing their duty I must say, as their pastor, that I hope and pray they will change their ways, and become practical, zealous and generous members of the par-

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ish. I do not wish to mention names, but I could single out in our midst individuals—nay, whole families, who are fervent exemplary members of this parish. Now to the slothful I say—join in with the good ones and follow their example.

Join with me then to-day, in giving fervent thanks to God for the past year and in invoking new and greater blessings for this new year.

An invocation or something like this:

Father Almighty, the giver of all good gifts, accept our most heartfelt thanks—mine and those of every member of this congregation. Their grateful hearts unite in one grand prayer of thanksgiving and love for all benefits and blessings which you bestowed upon them in the past. Send down special blessings, O Loving Master, upon my people, who have been so faithful and good during the past year; enlighten the minds and warm the hearts of all, especially of those who through ignorance or weakness have been negligent, that they may understand their duty and fulfill it. Amen.

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## The Epiphany

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The reading is from the Prophet Isaias.

He says: "Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

The feast of to-day is the Christmas of the Gentiles—our forefathers in the faith.

God led the Israelites through the desert by a column of fire shining in the sky. At Bethlehem, the sky was lit up by a heavenly light, which shone around the shepherds and around the whole country; now a beautiful star in the sky guides and leads the three kings or wise men to the house in which Jesus was living.

They recognize it as the star of the newly-born King—they follow it without hesitation, until it rests above the house in which Jesus was.

Melchior, white and venerable with age, brought the gold. Baltazar, dark colored, brought the myrrh,

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and Gaspar, the youngest of the three, brought frankincense.

In these offerings they recognized Christ as God, by the offering of the incense; as Man by the offering of the myrrh, and as King by the offering of gold.

Their journey was very long and difficult, but the sight of that wonderful star—the inward call of God which kept up their courage and wish to see the new-born King—gave them strength to persevere. They did not want to slight the call of the new-born King.

On their journey they certainly must have talked about that new-born King, and formed in their minds some idea of what they might expect to find when they would reach the place to which the star was guiding them.

The star did not stand above a royal dwelling, but above an humble home—a home to which the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph had taken the child.

They enter and the whole city of Bethlehem is surprised to see wealthy kings with the servants and their gifts enter that house. The light that shone

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on Christmas night frightened them, but when they saw that mysterious star approaching they were astonished and watched it carefully. They felt at the sight of the kings that the child dwelling in that house was no ordinary child, but must be of noble birth.

The three kings enter—what do they see? A most beautiful young mother holding her babe, a man kneeling in prayer—they suppose him to be the father. No sign of royalty or wealth, but the appearance of the child and mother so overcome their feelings that they imitated holy Joseph and knelt and adored the child. They have come with gifts to adore Christ.

That act of adoration brought to them the gift of faith and they recognized in Christ the Son of God.

No wonder then that they opened their gifts and laid them at the feet of Jesus—as to a God, to a Man and to a King.

How the Blessed Mother of Jesus thanks them—how St. Joseph thanked them.

What a revelation to them. All worldly grandeur is wanting, but silent and solemn and simple



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is the scene before them. The simplicity and the absence of great style and fashion bring out in bold relief the beauty of that sweet babe and of its divine mother. How grand is Mother Church to hold up before us on this great feast so beautiful and soul stirring a scene.

It teaches us that when God calls we should obey, no matter which obstacles or difficulties may stand in our way, and that God's gifts are those of the supernatural order. The kings received the gifts of faith. Their minds were enlightened by a supernatural light—their wills and hearts were uplifted unto that Child. They looked beyond natural appearances and recognized the Child as the Son of God.

Friends, Epiphany means to show, to manifest, to give testimony; the meaning applies so appropriately to this feast when Jesus made himself known to the three kings or Magi—that is, wise men.

But Epiphany has not passed away for us. Do you see that little light? That lamp burning day and night here before the tabernacle is the Star of Bethlehem—the Star of the Tabernacle; the star that is lit whenever Jesus dwells in our churches. It tells that Jesus lives here and by His presence, under the

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appearance of bread, manifests His divine presence and power—even more so to us than He did to the Magi.

Here He stays day and night in the silence of the tabernacle, and we can come and adore Him and offer Him more precious and welcome gifts than gold, myrrh and frankincense, namely our minds, by our lively and convincing faith in Him. Our wills, by our perfect submission to Him, and our bodies, by making them as they should be—the living temples of God.

Our minds, more precious to Him than gold; our wills, more dear to Him than frankincense, and our bodies, more valuable than myrrh.

Let us give heartfelt thanks to Jesus, and appreciate His dwelling in our midst in the tabernacle—the true, the living and perpetual feast of Christmas and Epiphany.

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## First Sunday After Epiphany

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I am reading to you from the letter which St. Paul wrote to the Romans. He says: "Be wise according as God hath divided to every one the measure of faith."

Beloved ones in God: You remember how on last Epiphany day our forefathers received the faith—they heeded that divine call, and grew wise according to the wisdom of God, who enlightened their understanding and strengthened their will, and they lived holy lives in accordance to the gift of that faith.

Like the Magi, God has called us to Him and has bestowed upon us that sublime gift by giving us life through the instrumentality of Catholic parents, letting us live now in the fullness of time as the great Apostle calls it.

Now, let us be wise according to that gift of faith, for which we can never thank God sufficiently.

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Think of it—born of Catholic parents, baptized into the Kingdom of God, the Church, when we were infants, trained by the instructions and good example of Catholic parents, brought by them to the Church.

Yes, the Church near us—the priest of God at our disposal to instruct us—oh, the grace, oh, the measure of the Catechism Class, and above all, the Catholic School.

The Sacraments. What blessing came to us through the Sacrament of

Penance, then our first Communion, the great Sacrament of Confirmation, Confession and Communion, the great and powerful means of restoring and keeping in our souls the grace of God, especially the gift of faith.

The sacrifice of the mass on Sundays and holy days, the instructions and sermons, our Church Societies, our extra devotions, in Lent and Advent, in the beautiful month of May. Oh, the great measure of faith that is given to us, the great means at our disposal. Are we wise according to the measure of that faith?

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If a business man in the world would have so many good and favorable opportunities to grow prominent and wealthy and would neglect them all, what would we think and say about him and yet this is only for temporal advantages.

Now at our disposal we have the means, strong and powerful, that bring us supernatural and divine wisdom—true wisdom for this world as well as for the next. Are we wise according to that measure?

The apostle teaches that God will hold us responsible according to the measure of our faith. What terrible responsibility we have. Do we realize this?

Poor heathens and idolaters, who do not know any better, to whom the divine light and measure of faith have not been given so directly and clearly as to us, how we pity them. They grope in the darkness in reference to the Supernatural, but what excuse can we offer?

Surrounded by all the blessings which Jesus has placed at our disposal through the Church and by our ministry, surely God has given us, we might say, the fullness of the measure of faith.

Well God will require much of us and justly so.



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Do you appreciate the Holy Sacrifice of the mass —by assisting when you can—or do you offer very foolish excuses to cover your want of appreciation and sloth.

What use do you make of the Sacraments of Penance, of Holy Communion.

What about your children, dear parents? What about instructing them, sending them to the school where they belong? Are you really wise according to the measure of the faith that God has given you?

Our non-Catholic friends, see many of them so earnest, so anxious, so sincere—even those who hate and persecute the church through blind hatred,—might be excused, but there is no excuse for you whatsoever.

Millions will never get the great blessings we have. Why not then appreciate those divine blessings and profit by it?

By being wise according to the measure of faith which God has given us, we shall grow wiser and wiser. Our minds will be filled with heavenly wisdom, life will be seen in the supernatural light of God and will be lived in the sublime grace or charity of Jesus Christ.

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## Second Sunday After Epiphany

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The reading to-day is taken from the history of what the apostles preached and did. It says: "By the name of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . this man standeth before you whole."

St. Peter cured this man and when the vast multitude wondered and looked astonished, he informs them that it is by the name of Jesus that the miracle was wrought.

Therefore God has given us this name as a most powerful means of obtaining favors—even miracles if necessary—for our temporal and spiritual welfare.

We could speak for hours on the sublimity and efficacy of that holy name, but my friends, I am sorry to say, and God knows I speak the truth, that the holy name, I mean that of Jesus and of God, are not revered and respected in our midst and that there are so called Christians, I am afraid, even in my congregation, who are, I dare not say bad and malicious, but so forgetful as to abuse these all-saving names by cursing and swearing.

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O, let the words of instruction which I speak to you to-day sink so deeply into your minds and hearts, that no one of us may ever be guilty of so mean, stupid and insulting a sin.

How many false consciences are there amongst our people! They scruple about eating meat on forbidden days, or even on Christmas when it falls on a Friday, or on some days when the Holy Father dispenses us from that obligation, or if they are sick, but they will curse and swear with the Holy names and insult God without seeming remorse.

Bad, scandalous, and to be condemned by everybody is the sin of drunkenness, yet in itself, cursing, swearing with the Holy names of God, is far more heinous in itself and more insulting to God.

The world looks a great deal to the exterior, but, as it is antagonistic to Christ, it cares little for the honor and glory of God.

Be very nice outwardly. O, never let a sign of drink be seen on you, talk nice to people and you are a splendid man, no matter how insultingly you may talk to God.

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It is a most stupid sin, for there is no satisfaction or benefit derived from it. Other sins bring along with them, at least some animal gratification—this none whatsoever.

This sin turns the means of salvation into a cause of damnation, for respect to God is the foundation of religion. How can we worship God, if we do not respect him? How can we respect him, if we insult him by our blasphemous cursing?

Again, the Holy names of God and Jesus are most powerful weapons in the time of temptation and dangers. Yet he who curses with them turns these powerful weapons into a cause of damnation.

What about your children? When and from whom do they learn that ugly and insulting sin? Is it not from you, parents, who should teach your children to pray and to use these Holy names not in vain, but for divine protection.

It is a sin which causes so much scandal, for children hear grown-up people curse, and they repeat these curses so readily and get into the habit of cursing.

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There is no excuse for that sin, for it is so vile, so degrading and so insulting to God. Do not say that you do it through habit and do not think of it, for the habit is worse than the sin itself and makes you more guilty in the sight of God.

Never will God hear the prayers of people who curse and swear, for they are an abomination in the sight of God.

How dare you come to Holy Communion and receive our dear Lord upon that blasphemous tongue?

Do you want to be saved? Do you want the blessing of God? Do you wish your prayers to be acceptable to God? Then remove from your midst, from your homes and from your lives that great sin which brings the curse of God upon you.

Not only, do not curse yourself, but do not allow it in your presence. Just as you would not allow anyone to speak bad against or about or to your father or mother, allow no one to curse or swear in your presence.

Do not allow them to pour out before you that disrespect and that insult to God, your father.



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Rather let us use these Holy names, so powerful, so efficacious, in the hour of prayer, of trial, of temptation, and God and Jesus will hear us and come to our assistance.

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## Third Sunday After Epiphany

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St. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, from which I read to you to-day, says: "Be not wise in your conceits, to no man rendering evil for evil . . . . not revenging yourselves, my dearly beloved."

Naturally the human soul loves justice. We admire those who practice it, and we condemn those who injure their neighbor. But when an injustice is done to us, oh then, we do not think of justice or virtue, or sin, Oh, no—self comes to the front. The idea of injuring us!

Unless we are careful then to mind what the Apostle says, we get so blind by our self-conceit and so rash in our actions, that we do not act like a human being. An animal is attacked, it springs back on its victim to devour it.

In our own estimation, we should be allowed to say about others what we like, find fault, criticise. Of course we are perfect unto ourselves, but every one else should be perfect—our parents, our brothers

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and sisters, our friends, our neighbors; add the whole world.

They should respect us and honor us and be good to us, and they should never say a word against us. Woe to anyone that speaks an unkind word or does anything to injure us.

Then self-conceit blinds us. Then we are aroused. Why, the idea, there is no sin or crime so terrible as to say such mean things against *me*, or do such things against me. Why, it is unpardonable—it is the worst thing I ever heard! Shame on them! Like a ferocious, blind, savage beast we are on the war-path.

Oh, now is the time to get even, and even we will get. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. We will even improve on this, and take the head for one eye. And the whole body for the other. Poor self has been hurt.

Very often it is only an imaginary evil—very often what has been told us is not so—it has been misunderstood. Oh, we do not stop to think. Pray we cannot. Why, we are astonished that God ever allowed that wretch to say or do anything against *us*.

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Poor conceited man or woman. They lie awake all night, thinking what they are going to say about, or do to that enemy. Wait till they meet him, they run to their relatives and neighbors. They talk, and nothing is too bad to say about their enemy. Why, they could kill him. How true the words of the Apostle. Rendering *evil, real evil*, often for imaginary evil.

And what do we gain by all this self-conceit? We do not talk or act like human beings. We injure the health of our souls and bodies. We cause ourselves a great deal of trouble and anxiety. Yet to no purpose, for all we do, say, or wish, will not injure our enemy.

Must I remind you of what I said a few Sundays ago? Brethren be wise according to the measure of your faith. Follow your faith and you will act like a Christian, a follower of Christ. Did he look for revenge? Follow your own conceit and you act like a heathen. Which is right?

Who can count the number of rash judgments and evil wishes of which the self-conceited become guilty in the sight of God? And how unhappy they are.

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Be calm for a moment,—think—would you or could you be a fair judge if your enemy were on trial? Can you judge them fairly as long as *self* is concerned? In our courts, no one who is a relative, or a friend, or who is prejudiced for or against the one on trial is allowed to be on the jury—much less to be the judge.

How could anyone on trial get a fair judgment if the judge were the offended party? We cannot expect such perfection in any human being. God alone can do this. But we, when offended, usurp judgment to ourselves. We want to fix the penalty. We want to carry out the sentence we gave in our self-conceit and see that it is carried out to the full extent. How blind—how rash.

“Therefore, judgment is mine, saith the Lord.” Leave revenge to God. If we imitate Jesus Christ, God will take our part. He will do us full justice and punish our enemies as they deserve.

Let us not sit in judgment upon our neighbor. Let not your enemies rob you of the peace of soul.

Let us be Christians—not heathens. Has anyone offended you, return not evil for evil, but send a



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fervent and sincere prayer to God for their welfare and if you are a generous Christian, you will even ask God to bless them and protect them in imitation of Jesus Christ—conquering self—destroying self-conceit—like a true Christian.

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## Fourth Sunday After Epiphany

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The reading is from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans: "Brethren, owe no man anything."

Let me call your close attention to these words of the Apostle. Owe no man anything. I want all of my people to be able to look honestly into their consciences and be able to say before God that they are strictly just and honest and as such that they owe no man anything.

This consideration is very important. We are apt to forget this great obligation to our neighbor and deaden the voice of our conscience.

We are always on the lookout for ourselves. We do not want to be in need of anything. We are very particular about ourselves and if we have not readily at hand what we like, we are apt to get it from our neighbor. We borrow, perhaps we take it from him. We grow wise in business methods and in our dealings with our neighbor, we become guilty of injustice. We are very ready to borrow,

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but very slow and neglectful in returning. We get things from our neighbor underhand. Of course we mean to return them and now we act unjustly in our dealings, our conscience is asleep. Of course some time or other we will make up, but practically we never make up.

Now all these things are simply wrong and unjust and it is my duty to call your attention to these things, for as long as you have in your possession anything that does not belong to you, God will not bless you and if you die, you will never see heaven until the last penny, the gospel says farthing, shall be paid.

How easy it is to get ahead of our neighbors. Some scruple not if they get too much change. If on their book the grocer or butcher does not mark the goods bought. Not to pay rent—to leave without paying it. Neglect doctor bills, drug bills, never pay a cent to the church, though we could easily do it, to cheat insurance companies—by burning insured buildings or barns, cheating railroad companies by not paying our fare as we should, by cheating in buying or selling, by not paying for our meals or boarding in hotels and in a thousand other ways.

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Now all such things are unjust, and if we do not make restitution we are living an unjust life and if we die in that unjust state, we will not be admitted into heaven unless restitution is made.

This is a very important law of God, as he has taught it himself, that nothing defiled shall enter heaven.

We should calmly, not nervously or scrupulously, examine our consciences about our past lives and if we see that we have been wanting in this important law of God, let us not delay, but make restitution as soon as possible, that is, part with what does not belong to us and lead a pure life.

Let us not flatter or deceive ourselves that we do not know just exactly how much it is—that it is so many years ago since it happened that we do not know the owners, that others injured us, that we would have to live more economically, that we would be poor if we made restitution, for all these are vain and foolish excuses which do not and cannot take away the obligation of restoring.

Postponing to make restitution is one of the greatest dangers to our salvation. Oh, we mean well,

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but meaning well does not save us. We must fulfill our obligations to God and to the neighbor.

The devil, our arch enemy, is very anxious to keep us owing to others, for he knows our strong inclination to hold on to what we have, justly or unjustly, and deceives us by making us believe that we will make restitution some time or other, later on, when we will have more to spare, when we can afford it, but that now we need it, that we do not intend to keep what does not belong to us, but for the time being we cannot do it conveniently and so life passes on and death comes and many are lost on that account and a great many have to suffer and are deprived of heaven until restitution is made.

In several cases, when the father or husband dies, and leaves all he has to his wife or children, they become responsible for his just debts. Let them not flatter themselves or rest secure about the eternal welfare of that soul until these just debts are paid.

Here is another very important consideration. I would advise every one of you not to rely on relatives or friends to make restitution for you, after your death. How very few are there who will fulfill this strict obligation for you when you are dead



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and gone! If you neglected it, may they not neglect it and excuse themselves by saying that the debt is not theirs but yours.

Now, brethren, if I did not call your attention to this important lesson of the Apostle: "Owe no man anything," I would not do my duty.

And I must warn you very strongly to teach your children to be strictly just, by word and especially by example.

Parents are very much to blame who encourage their children to steal wood or coal or anything else from neighbors, or railroads, or who do not punish their children and force them to take back anything which they bring home and which they got unjustly.

Let us be very careful about the law of justice and if you have transgressed it, delay not, make restitution at once, that is, as soon as possible. If you have any doubt whether you are bound to make restitution or not, or how to make it, ask your confessor and follow his advice.

As our dear Lord said, "Let not the sun set upon your injustice." Put your conscience at rest and observe the solemn warning of the great Apostle: "Brethren, owe no man anything."

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## Fifth Sunday After Epiphany

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The reading to-day is from the letter of St. Paul to the Colossians. He says: "And forgiving one another."

Not long ago I told you to mind the words of the great Apostle and never to do evil for evil. Today he tells us to go further and forgive one another. This commandment of the great law of Christian Charity is very important, for upon our forgiving one another depends our being forgiven by Almighty God.

Did you take special notice of the words of the reading to-day? The Apostle says: "Put ye on, therefore, as the elect of God, the bowels of mercy, bearing with one another . . . . If any have a complaint against another, even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also."

Understand it. The Apostle calls those who forgive, the elect, that is, the chosen ones of God. When we have a real complaint, not an imaginary

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one, against our neighbor, then he adds, even forgiving, not merely bearing with one another. And how should we forgive, even as the "Lord hath forgiven you."

Here the Apostle again only repeats the doctrine of Jesus, for the Saviour himself has preached it. My father will not forgive unless you forgive one another. From these divine words you should realize that forgiveness is necessary for salvation.

Forgiveness is a subject which is indeed very simple and easy in itself, but it is not understood by the majority of people.

No one objects when we talk to them about loving God, honoring Him and worshipping Him and giving thanks, but the moment we come to apply the precept of loving the neighbor, then our self-love immediately comes to blind us, we all at once discover faults and shortcomings. But when we preach that we must love our enemies, those who injured us, by forgiving them whatever they may have done against us; Oh, we draw back, we think it simply beyond human power and we imagine the law of God commanding us impossible things.

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There is our great mistake. God does not ask the impossible or anything above our strength. He knows us too well.

Well what does he ask? To forgive one another, that is, as the Apostle says, when we have a complaint against our neighbor, on account of some real, not imaginary evil, otherwise we cannot forgive, unless there is an offense; is to think and act towards those who have offended us as if they did not offend us.

But look at the motive. Should we forgive and think about and act towards those who offended us, because they did wrong, because they offended us? Oh, no, that is impossible and above all human power. God himself cannot and will not forgive, because people offend Him. That is simply absurd.

But we must forgive and can easily forgive, for the sake of God, because He asks us to forgive for His sake. Is this not easy? Does it not offer us a splendid chance of pleasing God and overcoming ourselves and imitating the example of our dear Lord?

To forgive an enemy is a noble Christian act, a divine act, a self-conquest—the grandest victory we

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can possibly gain in this world and a most sure means of securing pardon or forgiveness for our sins.

Understand me well. Feeling has little to do with this. Whether a friend or an enemy cuts me I feel it just the same, but the thought of cutting back and not forgiving, there is the sin.

We may cry, we may feel like revenging ourselves and almost kill the one who injured us. There is no sin, these feelings are the natural tendency of a poor, weak human nature, but to rise above that feeling and not to act through it, but for God's sake, to follow Christ and forgive is the true sign of a follower of Jesus Christ.

Saint or sinner, you must forgive one another. You cannot be a saint, that is, a follower of Jesus Christ, to be like our Lord, unless you forgive, and if you are a sinner, the best and easiest way to become a good Christian is to forgive.

The whole trouble with us is we think too much of self. We don't care whether God is offended or our neighbors or friends, as long as we are not hurt



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we do not care. But let them touch us, and self is aroused and we want revenge and we cannot and will not forgive.

Consider how noble it is to forgive for the sake of Jesus Christ. What are we but poor, sinful creatures and if anyone offends us, especially through thoughtlessness, or forgetfulness, or passion, let us rise above our feelings and in imitation of our Lord, forgive for His sake.

The true Christian has no enemies. Remembering Jesus Christ, when dying on the cross, who said: "Father forgive them" (those who had just crucified Him, as well as those who stood under the cross, reviling Him) "for they know not what they do."

Brethren, forgive. Is there anyone here who has not forgiven his brother, his friend, or his neighbor? Remove from your heart that hardness, that uncharitableness and spirit of revenge and speak the word of forgiveness. As Jesus forgives me, so I forgive you for His sake.

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## Sixth Sunday After Epiphany

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Let me read to you the beautiful letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians. Please give special attention to it.

Oh, my dearly beloved in Jesus Christ, how I do wish that I, as your pastor, could say of you what the great Apostle says of his flock, the Thessalonians: "I give thanks to God always for you, being mindful of the work of your faith, and labor and charity, for our gospel hath not been unto you in word only and you became followers of us and of the Lord, so that you were made a pattern to all who believe."

How happy would I be this morning if from my heart I could sincerely say to you and of you what the Apostle said to his people.

Like a good, loving father who reflects and thinks about and prays for the welfare of his children, so I, your pastor, think of you. In my prayers you are before me and when in moments of deep reflection

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I go over the different families which belong to my congregation, how do I rejoice, for I find amongst them persons and in many instances whole families who are good, a credit to the congregation and to the Church. To these I do apply the very words of the Apostle—which I read to you—and many more of his beautiful sayings as he wrote to the first Christians. You are my joy and my consolation, my crown. Yes, you bring me great joy, it is a consolation to be with you and to speak to you and to celebrate mass for you. You, by your good works and good example, you crown with success the good work of Christ, which I am endeavoring to perform for your and my welfare.

But there are others amongst you, and I would belie my work and deceive you if I were to say that these are good and exemplary, that they are a source of joy and consolation and that they crown my ministerial work by following the advice I have to give them and do give them.

Please understand this well—that the anxiety which I feel for you is heartfelt; that I am most anxious to remove from my congregation anything sinful or faulty, and for the sake of our Lord and His

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holy Church, that all my prayers and desires are to see you all perfect in every respect.

At times it does happen that I hear a complaint about some of you; well, it pains me very much, and when at times I visit another congregation and see them so good and attentive and fervent, I cannot help making comparisons. I return with greater joy or grief as I find that you, beloved, show more faith and fervor than, or are inferior to, the other congregation.

My whole life is given to your spiritual, and even, if possible in any way, to your temporal welfare. Judge, then, of the joy or sorrow caused to me, by your good lives or your slothful way of acting.

Why should this be? I cannot find any reason in the Gospel I preach, for that is not mine. What we say to you is the Gospel as Christ preached it, and the Apostles repeated it and so do I to the best of my ability.

It cannot be the grace of God which is wanting, for at all times God's grace is sufficient and generally superabundant.

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The good and practical members of the congregation do not receive more than the slothful. Do you not see that the fault lies with yourself? You neglect the grace of God. "You do not become followers of us and of the Lord." You do not receive the word with joy, so that you may be a pattern to others, but you neglect to hear the word; you neglect the graces that God holds out to you, and hence you follow not the word, but follow your natural slothfulness—your ease and bodily comfort—and you are not a pattern, but a stumbling-block to those outside of our faith, and a scandal to the other members of the Church.

Can I say to you this morning the sublime words of the Apostle: "Your faith which is towards God is gone forth, so that we need not to speak anything. You turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God."

Do you think if St. Paul were your pastor here, that he would say these words to those of this congregation who are so careless and negligent?

I say he would rejoice in seeing my good people and speak to them the eloquent words he spoke to the first Christians, but to the slothful he would say



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the reverse: You turned away from God to serve idols—that means, you have forgotten God and His law; you have idolized your evil propensities by losing the grace of God by the neglect of your Church.

Let the words of the Apostle which I have tried to explain to you make a lasting impression on your minds and hearts—turn away from all sloth and indifference; give glory to God and honor to the Church and to me, as your pastor, joy and consolation. Let me see so great and clear a change in all those who need it that I can conscientiously say to God, to myself, to all my brother priests, to my congregation, that you, my dear ones in God, are a model, a pattern to all.

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## Septuagesima Sunday

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I have chosen the following words from the letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians: "I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty; so run that you may obtain."

What an important advice the great Apostle gives us to-day. We all live for some object; we all run in the race as the Apostle tells us—some to obtain a corruptible crown or reward, others the incorruptible.

How all our newspapers, and very many pamphlets sent us, speak so eloquently about investing money in mines and lands of every description. How, if we have any money laid by, or even if we could sell land or other goods we become interested, and begin to think seriously of investing or taking stock.

Now, my dear friends, suppose this morning that I were to tell you from very reliable and sure information that there is a country, just discovered,

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abounding in treasures, in which the pure gold and glistening diamonds in their native rock can be found and worked at little or no cost. Would you not listen attentively? Would you not be very much interested? Would you not call on me and find out every particular, and if you had some means, wouldn't you invest and even run some risk?

Oh, the glitter of that great fortune; oh, the golden stores of wealth heaped up before us in that distant land. Our imagination would grow wild; our prospects so grand, the enterprise easy. Why, we must try it at any cost.

But our friends, our relatives, our homes—well, we would be willing to shed a parting tear, to give the farewell kiss, for, of course, it would only be for a few years, and then we would return laden with wealth. We could deck our loved ones with diamonds set in virgin gold, and dress them in the finest silk. We would build for magnificence and comfort. O, the happy days we would then live.

And all this (O, but wait; are you sure to succeed—for many make the attempt and perish in it) to secure a corruptible crown; wearing away our

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life's best efforts, running, as the Apostle says, as at an uncertainty.

Look at the world at large. See its rush and commotion—nearly every one on the go, not even to get so large a fortune as I have been telling you about, but to gather and lay by a few paltry dollars.

How they toil, how they labor from morning till night—foregoing even the home comforts, ever busy to think of new schemes, how to succeed in business—a corruptible crown, says the Apostle, for money passes from one hand to the other, and at the hour of death we must leave it all.

What would the world say if we were to encircle the bed of a dying man, or his corpse after death, with pieces of silver and gold? Wouldn't that be folly? And yet why live for it?

Now, friends, reflect. Am I addressing Christians? Have you been baptized—that is, reborn of Christ and in Christ? Have you become an heir and coheir of Jesus Christ? Do you ever expect to reach heaven—to obtain with certainty that incorruptible crown of which the Apostle speaks?

Here is a positive and infallible announcement which I must make to you in the name of God, who

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will not and cannot deceive you. I make it to-day in the burning words of St. Paul: "Brethren, so run that you may obtain"—what? Heaven, the abode of rest and peace; the great country where not perishable, but everlasting wealth and riches are enjoyed for ever. There can be no risk or no mistake about this, for we have it upon the authority of Jesus Christ—of all His Apostles and followers.

Think you that all the Apostles and doctors of the Church, and all the holy-lived people, the millions of martyrs and all the saints of God, gave up this world and led lives of penance, and gave up their very lives as witnesses of that promise, were all mistaken and ran as to an uncertainty? Impossible! The greatest intellects and the most brilliant men and women have followed the words of Christ and of the Apostles, running to a certainty, with the full conviction of the testimony of Jesus Christ and His Apostles.

In life, men and women risk money and health. Why? Oh, because they heard so much about that land and the mines and the wealth, and yet there is no certainty. It is probable it looks very enticing. But here stands the masterpiece of God's goodness and truth to man, His divine Church, es-



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tablished by Himself to preach unerringly, to lead men unto the incorruptible crown, to show us the way, to give us the means, to guide and help us in the obtaining of the everlasting treasures of heaven, the great country where wealth and happiness are so superabundant that the divine witness who came to tell us about it said: "Eye hath not seen," etc.

Do you not see, beloved ones, what we should learn from the words which Mother Church speaks to us to-day through our ministry?

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice and all other things shall be given unto you.

One thing is necessary—save your soul at any cost and let nothing in this world interfere with that great and only necessary work.

Brethren, so run as to obtain the crown of immortality. Is not this worth more than all the wealth and pleasure of this world? Do we do as much to obtain this eternal happiness as we do to obtain the passing things of the world? Brethren, let us repeat it: So run as to obtain the *incorruptible crown*.

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## Sexagesima Sunday

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I take for the subject of our instruction to-day the beautiful words which the Lord spoke to St. Paul. "My grace is sufficient for thee."

Do not expect me to-day to unravel or explain the wonderful things the Apostle speaks of—his revelations. He being taken up to the third heaven and seeing things no man can utter. We can admire such things, but we do not need them for our guidance and salvation, for remember the words just quoted: "My grace is sufficient for thee."

But, dear friends, I want to explain clearly to you, to be reasonable in the service you offer to God, and to be guided by the teachings of the Church, and not to be lead astray or influenced by wonderful and extraordinary things which happen, unless the Church gives her sanction to it.

Understand me well. Far be it from me to condemn or criticise, to oppose or to find fault with, so many nice practices—such as pilgrimages, as

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shrines, seemingly miraculous, a thousand forms of expressing devotion to our dear Jesus—such as special devotion to the babe of Bethlehem, the holy face, the heart of Jesus represented by itself, the beautiful infant of Prague—too many to mention, the thousands of shrines in honor of the Blessed Virgin, under every shape and form imaginable, and many more shrines sacred to the memory and veneration to millions of saints of God. These are all very nice, but in worshipping thus and visiting at all those shrines, I want you to remember that they are so many various ways of expressing our true devotion to God through these means—one word will explain it to you. The only real and genuine shrine about which there can be no mistake standing with the word of Jesus Himself and with the infallible sanction of the Church is, Jesus in the tabernacle. And unless statues and devotions and shrines, no matter under what form or shape, bring us nearer to Christ, or rather should they direct our attention or worship from Him, they do us harm.

So it is, my beloved friends, with the books which lay claim to be the lives of the saints. What fine and instructive reading. Oh, I do expect you to read

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them, but remember that many things are related, especially those extraordinary wonders which are not really the source of the holiness of the saint, which I suppose are true, but still which, although we may admire them, should not form the basis of our lives, for the Church has never taught these things, and whether true or not, the facts related contain nothing against faith or morals.

Now in reading these books, just as when we honor Christ or His saints or go to shrines, let us not look for the extraordinary, but see in all these things a variety of ways in which to honor God.

If by close research we should find out that many things related in the lives of the saints, or so-called miraculous doings at shrines or in pilgrimages are not so, this would not interfere with the sanctity of the saints nor with the worship which people give to Christ or His blessed Mother or the saints, but if we are careful to await the sanction of the Church and follow her dogmatic teaching (and let me mention to you the family spirit of correct Christian faith, it is called sometimes the Catholic instinct, a safe feeling naturally arising in the minds and hearts of the properly instructed and practical Catholics. I will speak to you about it later on.) We shall



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first and foremost take the faith in its fullness from the Church and make it the anchor of our mind and knowledge and faithfully practice what the Church holds as absolutely certain and solid; then for the rest, respect all forms of devotion or outward expressions of worship, especially when the ordinary Church authorities permit it, but in all faith and practice never overlook the essential.

Shall I make my meaning so clear that there will be no room for misunderstanding? For instance, if I firmly believe in Jesus Christ as the great and true model of all perfection, from whom at best all saints, the Blessed Mother included, must learn to be holy and saintly; if I am thoroughly convinced that Jesus is in the tabernacle, really and truly, then my best prayers and deepest reverence will be at the foot of the altar upon which Jesus dwells.

If I go before the statue of the Sacred Heart, the nicely dressed infant of Prague, the holy face picture, and even the crucifix; if I forget that they are only representations, I overlook the essential; if I kneel and venerate, and adore—not the representation, but the reality—and make use of the representation to bring the living Jesus nearer to me, whether that picture was or is miraculous or not, I



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am worshipping as a true Catholic. And yet I repeat, give me every time the tabernacle in which Jesus dwells.

What are visions and special revelations, even miracles? Do you remember that Judas fed the multitude with the other Apostles and the bread multiplied in his hands in the same way as it did in the hands of the other Apostles.

St. Paul, as he tells us to-day, had wonderful visions. May they not be to some a source or occasion of danger; may they not be false and delusive? Oh, brethren, God's grace, as it is unmistakably given to our minds and hearts by the Church, is sufficient for us.

From many shrines, so called, water is sent all over the world to effect cures, and from all reports wonderful things have happened, but, friends, do you think that the Mother of God or saints will ask Jesus to cure you by drinking of the so-called miraculous water if you neglect to receive Jesus Himself in Holy Communion? Here is a clear fact: People say the water is miraculous. Let us say, *it may be*, but the Church says: You receive Jesus Christ when you go to Communion. How secure,

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how safe. Well, I will then receive Jesus first, and if He, through the intercession of any saint wishes to cure me, all right; I trust in Him.

Friends, be intelligent in the practice of your faith; follow the Church in all her doctrines and practices; let them be your guide, and never find fault or criticise any practice, but do not let them take the place of or interfere with the essentials. "My grace is sufficient to thee."

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## Quinquagesima

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St. Paul wrote to them one of his most beautiful and instructive letters. I just read it to you. It was addressed to the Corinthians.

You must have noticed nearly every Sunday, as I read to you some parts of the letters which the Apostles wrote to the first Christians, that they always refer to charity, to the love we owe one another as children of our Father, God, who is in heaven, for the sake of Jesus Christ, who loved us so much as to give His life for us.

But to-day he takes charity as the principal subject of his letter or instruction, which he sent to his beloved children in God.

Now, my dear friends, I would not dare think that I could speak to you to-day as he, the inspired Apostle, spoke to them.

And yet charity is the sublime, the ennobling virtue—never can anything be said too lofty about it.

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Hear again the great words: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels." Dear people, what is oratory, eloquence, soul-stirring, burning words, which the greatest speakers ever spoke? Why call down from heaven the angels of God, like Gabriel, who spoke so beautifully and respectfully to our Blessed Lady on the day of the Annunciation? Bring all human and angelic powers of speech. Let our voice reach the farthest ends of the earth; let our speech please and flatter, and hold you all spell-bound—but charity is wanting. If it is not the charity of God and the neighbor that prompts our words—what is it, then? Sounding brass.

Look at the divine gift of prophecy. God Almighty revealing to us the unknown and hidden future—yes, the mind may be brilliant and far-seeing; it may be lit up by the divine light of future knowledge, and still if the heart does not possess charity, prophecy is nothing.

Oh, but we may possess the deepest intellect and with God's power know *all* mysteries, and specially gifted acquire all knowledge; furthermore, my mind might hold faith so strong as to remove mountains. Without charity *it is nothing*.

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No good works are of any supernatural merit without charity. It is the necessary condition without which we cannot possibly please God, which are the unmistakable marks of charity, that sublime, that divine virtue—the touchstone which turns our smallest and most insignificant actions into pure virgin gold.

For we could go on for ever extolling the praises of charity and yet never do justice to it. Remember that it is necessary for us to understand the practice of charity, and most necessary for salvation.

It is not a natural virtue; it does not come from an amiable or quiet or gentle disposition; a ready way of getting along with people—a nature which does good to those who are good to us. All these gifts are only so many natural helps which make the practice of charity easy, but it is essentially a supernatural and divine virtue which rises by the grace of God to the sublime and supernal.

As God is our Father, the Father of every human being, Christ our model independently of what people say or do—charity divine and supernatural means to overcome myself and sacrifice myself for



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the good and welfare of others—that is, first to those at home, then to relatives, friends, neighbors, to all, so that wherever there is a human soul, my charity reaches it, for God's sake, and in imitation of Jesus Christ, my model.

Charity is the arch enemy of the greatest obstacle to our salvation—self-love.

Charity never faileth. Faith and hope will cease at the hour of death; charity is then made perfect.

Charity is so ingenious—Charity finds a way where all other virtues fail.

It is so patient, so considerate, knowing as we do, that we are far from being perfect ourselves. Charity is forbearing and never will expect from others what we are not ourselves.

Charity will take the cloak of self-love from our own self and cover it with the faults and shortcomings of the neighbor and for the sake of God not only excuse the neighbor but love him.

Now, dear brethren, only he who practices this sublime virtue is heroic—is a true Christian, sacrificing self for the good of others in imitation of Jesus Christ, who said: “By this they shall know that you are mine if you love another.”

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## Ash Wednesday

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Holy Mother Church to-day tells me to read to you from the prophet Joel. I must call your attention to the words, which he preached to those who were awaiting the coming of Christ: "Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting and in weeping and in mourning." Every word of that reading is so appropriate to this holy season of Lent which we are beginning to-day.

All over the Christian world to-day the Church tells her priests to bless ashes and sign your forehead with them in the form of a cross, speaking the prophetic words, which have been verified for millions and will come true in our case—"Remember, man, that thou art dust and unto dust thou shall return."

Mother Church who regenerated us in Jesus Christ—who gave us the supernatural life, guided by the wisdom of God—calls upon us, telling us this is the acceptable time, to turn to God, to be converted, to fast and weep and mourn as Jesus

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said: "Blessed are they that weep; blessed are they that mourn."

Thank God that every year the season of Lent comes around. I thank God especially for this year's Lent, for, brethren, I expect great spiritual fruit, true, sincere conversion for those who have been negligent, and the higher sanctification for those who have been faithful.

Lent, the great season of the year to do penance, when the whole Christian world redoubles prayers, gathers more frequently in the church to hear the word of God, to serve God more fervently, when from the Holy Father upon the chair of Peter down to the youngest Christian child which has come to the age of reason, are all uniting in prayer and practices of self-restraint and abstinence, is it not truly, in the words of the prophet, the acceptable time?

During this holy season God gives grace more abundantly, because He sees not *one* or a few individuals praying and practicing extraordinary acts of penance, but the whole Church, with all her officials, with her thousands of priests and religions, with her millions of the laity, all in one accord,

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calling upon God for mercy and forgiveness, doing penance in order that their prayers may be more efficacious.

Shouldn't I therefore join with that army of the Church and exhort you, my dear ones, in Christ to enter into the spirit of this holy season?

I will read you, as I read to you last Sunday, the regulations of Lent. Observe them as well and punctually as you can, showing thereby your submission and obedience to the expressed laws of the Church, for he who will not hear the Church, etc.

Now, brethren, let not self-love blind you. The spirit of Lent means to conquer yourself, to subdue your passions, which perhaps have had the mastery over you; to root sin out of your hearts, as the prophet says, be converted to God with your whole heart.

Therefore, do not be satisfied with selecting some practice during Lent, and as soon as Lent is over return to your former way of living—for instance, you will not drink a drop during Lent; you will not smoke; you will not eat flesh meat; you will abstain from candy or some luxury in which you are accustomed to indulge. All these things are praise-



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worthy and to be recommended, but all these practices will not help you, or help you very little, unless you stop your indifference and sloth or sin.

Let me suggest some practices: Do not sometimes miss mass on Sundays when you should hear it; make the firm resolve not to miss during Lent in order to correct that sinful habit. I say the same of cursing, of swearing, of neglecting to frequent the Sacraments, of hard language or conduct at home, and of giving scandal, of uncharitable talk. Now make your resolutions about such things, and then add your other chosen penances as a means to obtain the grace of God to change your sinful lives. Rend your hearts and not your garments, says the prophet.

The law of the Church asks of us, and the spirit of the Church guides us during this holy season to abstain from not only all sinful or dangerous indulgences or gratifications or amusements, but to abstain, through the true spirit of penance, from lawful amusements and entertainments. A good, exemplary Catholic will not go in Lent to balls. I do not mean public balls, which are always dangerous, but even to private parties, to theaters, to concerts, great banquets, though there is no wrong, yet



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to attend all such gatherings is not in keeping with the spirit of the Catholic Church. During this holy season she calls upon us to return to the Church and our homes, and in spirit to follow Jesus, our model, into the desert when he fasted and prayed for forty days. As St. Paul says, there is a time for rejoicing and feasting, but there is also a time to pray and to mourn. Friends, I leave it to you now to judge—how we should spend this holy season, and the Holy Ghost will guide you, and I hope you will follow His holy inspiration.

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## First Sunday of Lent

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St. Paul exhorts the Corinthians in the letter which he wrote to them and which I have just read to you: "That you receive not the grace of God in vain. Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

At all times God gives grace sufficient for our salvation, for as He created us for heaven, he must place at our disposal the means to reach heaven, otherwise he would make our salvation impossible.

This becomes still clearer by the words he spoke. Without me you can do nothing, so that we need the assistance of God through Christ in order to be saved.

But there are special times or occasions of grace when God dispenses more favors than at ordinary times. On great festivals the Church opens her treasury more widely, and those who apply to her she enriches with greater treasures; such, friends, is the time of Lent, the acceptable time, the time of salvation.

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The object of my prayers, especially in the holy sacrifice of Mass, the earnest wish of my priestly heart is for your special welfare during this holy season, so that you may profit by the special graces and powerful means of salvation which holy Mother Church dispenses during this holy season.

Lent is the best season of the year for retirement from the world, from all its amusements, the special time of recollection, prayer, examination of conscience.

Every year religious and priests are accustomed to withdraw even from their priestly functions or ordinary religious exercises to give their whole mind and soul to prayer, to special reflections, to enter into their consciences and examine themselves carefully, how they stand in relation to God. It is called a retreat, retiring as it were from the world to think of and speak solely to God.

At times we have a mission. It is, properly speaking, a retreat for the congregation, and it is certainly a special time of great graces and spiritual blessings, but let me say to you that Lent is better than any retreats or missions.

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I might call Lent the time in which the whole Christian world enters upon a retreat or mission and that God showers upon the members of His Church more abundant graces and favors than during any other season.

Beloved ones, let me strongly impress upon your mind to spend this holy season in the truly Christian *spirit*. The letter killeth, the spirit vivifieth. I want to see my whole congregation observe Lent well, as I explained it to you on Ash Wednesday, but all the external actions of church-going, or of abstinence will profit you nothing unless you do all these things with the true, correct spirit of Lent.

When a dear father or beloved mother dies there is in that family a feeling of grief and sorrow. We need not tell the beloved ones who have lost their dear one to grieve or feel sad. Each and every one of the home shares in it; their hearts are nearly broken. It is not black dress or dark drapings, that is the outward, and if these are not true marks of the grief of the heart they are mere mockery.

Brethren, remember that this holy season is in remembrance and much more, in imitation of the forty days' fast of our Lord in preparation of Holy



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Friday, the day upon which Jesus died, and for the great solemnity of Easter to celebrate worthily His resurrection.

Now judge which feelings should be uppermost in your hearts during this holy season—the thought of Jesus fasting and praying, the thought that our sins caused all His sufferings, the thought that we are called upon to join in His fast and prayer, to atone for our past sins, to remove all sin from our hearts, to prepare to die to the world and sin and rise with our dear Jesus on Resurrection morning.

These holy and pious thoughts should arouse our whole soul, and they should be the motives which urge us on with true devotion to observe Lent most punctually.

This holy season is so appropriate to practice self-control, it may be that there are some amongst us who have never learned to control their passionate or slothful natures; they are carried along by the animal feelings, and they never resist them, but they are led astray by them. Perhaps some have never in their whole lives performed an act of self-control. Oh, now is the acceptable time to bring the cravings of our fallen nature under subjection, to purge all the old leaven, as the Apostle says.



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Let me come to particulars. These are excellent suggestions for Lent.

In the morning do you rise promptly or do you give way to sloth? There you are tossing and rolling around in bed when it is time to rise, and you could easily do so.

With some effort, for you that live close to the Church, could very easily come to mass, and by so doing consecrate the day to God; or if you cannot come do your best to have morning family prayers, with attention and devotion.

Do you watch over yourself, not to give way to your feelings of impatience, or of anger, or to resent some remark that may be made to you? Do you restrain your appetite by not giving it whatever it craves for, avoiding all excess in eating and drinking? Do you put aside all that useless reading which is simply frivolous? Will you during this holy season engage in useful and instructive reading—such as the life of Christ or of the Saints, or the history of the Church, or above all, the Holy Bible, especially the New Testament, instead of all your illustrated newspapers full of sensationalism? Will you get a good Catholic paper, telling you

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about your church and the great good accomplished by her members? Will you attend the devotions of Lent? Perform that beautiful and solid devotion of the Way or Stations of the Cross, and at home say the beads with the other members of the family, and finally abstain from all public and unnecessary amusements during the holy season?

Now, beloved, if you will spend this holy season in the manner which I have just explained to you, will not God bless you, aye, more than in a retreat or a two weeks' mission? Will not God, the author and giver of all good gifts, strengthen you with His grace and fill your soul with devotion and love, for Him and for your salvation?

Do this and you shall live. Yes, friends, you shall live the life of the true Catholic—the docile child of the Church. You shall then receive the grace of God, but not in vain, but it shall work in you the divine strength of God unto maturity—that is, life everlasting.

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## Second Sunday of Lent

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St. Paul's letter read to-day was addressed to the Thessalonians. In it he says: "The will of God is your sanctification; not in the passion of lust, for God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto sanctification in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Friends, these sublime words of the great Apostle should be engraven deeply in the minds and hearts of every Christian, especially during this holy season.

There is an inborn feeling in our nature to avoid and shun all dangers of contagious and catching diseases; for instance, cholera, smallpox, diphtheria. How we would keep away from our best friends and neighbors and warn our children to keep away from them, and even forbid them to go to the house in which the disease is, and the people affected cannot take this amiss.

Would you go there and visit and sit down and chat and come in contact with the diseased person,

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breathe in their contagious breath, inoculate the disease by touching them?

Would you not punish your children if they went there, or if they or you went by mistake, would you not be alarmed or change your dress, and bathe and take antidotes?

Do not health officers send warning and place placards or signs on the house where some affected person is sick? The diseased must be isolated, for we must prevent the spreading of that contagion.

Would we not all severely condemn any one who would go to those sick and stay with them and then go and visit other families.

Friends, when a farmer learns that there is a contagious sickness among cattle, does he not fence in his own stock in order to prevent that disease affecting his cattle?

We deserve great praise for all this, and we should be glad that the health officers do their duty so well in order to secure the health of the people and safeguard it by preventing fatal diseases from spreading.

Would to God that people were as careful about avoiding the fatal and very contagious diseases of

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the soul as they are about avoiding the danger of catching some disease of the body.

How inconsistent, how foolish to save our bodily life, which after all we must give up sooner or later; we are so careful and particular, but to save our spiritual and temporal and external life we are so careless.

Brethren, please recall the words of the Apostle: "God hath not called us unto uncleanness." You know well to which sin he refers in these words, a sin of which he says: We should not even mention it amongst Christians. Therefore, I need not and dare not name it here at the altar in the presence of Jesus—a sin most contagious and so common and above all so fatal, and to which by our fallen nature we are so inclined.

Therefore, we are predisposed to it and we know from the advice of good, experienced physicians that in cases of epidemics, that means when some catching disease is spreading fast, if our blood is not in good condition we are more liable to catch the disease.

The sin to which the Apostle refers and to which I am bound to call your attention is more fatal and



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brings more sickness and wretchedness and deaths than all the contagious and fatal diseases known amongst us.

Yes, that sin ruins both body and soul, not alone for this life, but for all eternity.

As regards the body—I am sure, if people would understand the terrible effects it produces on the body, by wrecking the nervous system, by vitiating the blood, and deadening all vitality, producing melancholy and depression and even idiocy, they would shun the very thought of it and would do all in their power never to yield to it or to expose themselves to it.

The living image of God, man, if he indulges in that sin becomes like a living grave full of corruption, dragging out a miserable life, soon to be in an early grave.

The evil becomes much greater and more difficult to do away with if it grows into a habit, for then its ravages are fearful.

God knows us well and also the dangers in which we live. How we are surrounded by temptation, and He will save us, for He will never allow us to be tempted above our strength.

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See how he kept untouched and unhurt the three children in the fiery furnace, and so He will protect us.

But do not give free scope to your senses, rather let us use the powerful means which Jesus Christ has left at our disposal to avoid that sin and its dangers. Do we use the antidotes so efficacious and sure which God has placed at our disposal?

Do you pray—pray in earnest for divine grace? Do you call upon the Blessed Mother of Jesus for her protection? She is the mother of purity. Do you belong to the sodality and try to live as one of her chosen children?

Do you take divine remedies, divine strength, by frequently receiving Holy Communion—Jesus, the fountain of all purity?

But above all, do you avoid the deliberate and wilful occasions of this sin? All your prayers and communions will not do you any good if you do not avoid the wilful occasions, for the Holy Ghost has said it: “He who loves the danger shall perish therein.” Fall you shall, if you want to see and hear everything, if you indulge your bodily cravings.

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O beloved ones, how beautiful, how peaceful and happy is the life of the pure of heart. Good health, clear mind and strong will power and a heart full of happiness, for the pure see God.

Therefore, during this holy season restrain the bodily appetites, practice self-denial. Steer clear of all the dangerous occasions of this ugly sin, and go to God, unto sanctification in Christ our Lord.

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## Third Sunday of Lent

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To-day I want to explain to you, brethren, these words of the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians. He refers to the sin of which I spoke last Sunday, and how the world is full of that sin and others, but advises you to let no man deceive you with vain words, and therefore not to be partakers with them; but to walk as the children of light.

Do you remember the striking fact related in the Holy Bible about the three Hebrew children who were cast into the fiery furnace in Babylon? They walked in the midst of the fire, through the flames, and were not hurt, though on that occasion the terrible furnace was heated more than ever before.

Of course, you understand, brethren, that God did this to show King Nabuchodonosor and his followers the truth of the words which the three youths had told them. Our God can keep us safe in the midst of the flames of the fiery furnace.

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Beloved friends, I dare say that we, too, live in a fiery furnace, all ablaze with devouring flames and scorching and consuming fire. I refer to this world in which we live, and in which we must save our souls, notwithstanding all the dangers around us.

I would rather be cast into a white-hot furnace and be consumed like a bit of wood and die—death would be very quick—than to be in a furnace hot, not with flame, but with vice and everything enticing and alluring me to do wrong and lead me astray from the path of virtue. Let the terrible blaze of a fire consume my body, rather than the fire of sin consume both my soul and body by its terrible consequences here and hereafter.

There is within us the concupiscence of the eyes, those windows of the soul, always open to see, to admire, to be ensnared, that concupiscence which so quickly makes our hearts long for what we see, no matter what it may be, good or bad, provided it is pleasing to the sight.

And the false light and the mere outward glitter the world throws around the seeming brilliant and captivating things which she places so glaringly before us.



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A mere look will convince us of this. Her advertisements on our streets and fences and in her newspapers and her circulars which are broadcast, her bright coloring, her lascivious pictures, her nude forms, her indecency under the pretext of art, and of the form divine, her suggestive pictures and paintings, her dress, the outgrowth of fashion, the great cause of immodest slavery, her public balls and banquets and shows, during which her brilliant gayety is simply worldly, self-conceited, vain and proud men, and especially women, try to outdo one another by exhibiting their forms, their dress, their wealth, their jewelry and make one another jealous. It is like a show window in a large store about Christmas time—a great display of trinkets to attract the crowd.

There are the other windows of the soul—the ears through which holy faith should come to us. The world has its gossip, and lying and evil sayings—its boasting, its denial of God and of whatsoever is holy; its music so ingeniously arranged as to flatter the passions.

Like paganism of old, the world wants the home luxuriously extravagant, the soft bed, so agreeable to the body to indulge laziness; the dainty table with

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every luxury imaginable; the late hours of the night to revel in drink and gratification; the long hours of sleep stretched far into the day, having no use for the Church or the poor—rather despising them—avoiding them as something that would interfere with their pleasure, so completely animal that there is little left of the intellectual and moral life. They live for this life, enslaving them.

Beloved friends, there is the fiery furnace in which we live, and its fire is so quick and devouring because it flatters and entices us through our passions, that unless we are protected by the help of God we shall surely be lost.

In the days of martyrdom the first Christians were warned, and strong in their faith they gloried in the fact that they were hated and persecuted, and they gave up life and all for Christ. Yes, sword and axe and rack and fire, are not as dangerous to us as the insinuating and enticing means which the world uses in order to rob us of our faith.

Therefore, the Apostle warns us: Be not partakers with them but walk as the children of God.

If you follow the majority as it goes on in the world you are on the road to perdition.

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Walk as the children of God, hearing His voice, following His commands and precepts.

God will protect you and keep you from harm in the midst of this miserable, sinful and dangerous world if you will call upon Him and especially now during this holy season, if you will bring that body under subjection, guard your senses, spend this holy season in the true spirit of penance so contradictory to the licentious spirit of the world. The children of God walk the road that Christ walked, and by prayer and fasting and good works, especially by receiving the Sacraments, keep away from the world, and follow Christ our Lord, whom the Father sent to us as our model.

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## Fourth Sunday of Lent

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I read to you to-day from the letter which St. Paul wrote to the Galatians. These words, taken from that letter, will give us abundant matter for our instruction: "So then, brethren, we are not the children of the bondwoman, but of the free, by the freedom, wherewith Christ has made us free."

Dear friends, the world at large does not understand freedom. By it is meant to think whatever pleases, whether true or false; to do whatever one likes, whether good or bad. It is licentiousness, not freedom. The broader and the more extensive the truth which our minds possess, the freer the mind, and the more good we do, the nobler our hearts, as Christ our Lord said: "The truth shall set us free."

The fact that our minds are fallible and our wills weak and inclined to evil, puts a limit to our freedom, as we cannot go beyond certain bounds without debasing our natures and thus destroying our real

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freedom, which should ever elevate our natures and not hurt them.

He who knows truth correctly and embraces good, and cannot make a mistake is really free. Liability to make mistakes and malice to do wrong is not freedom, but perversion.

And how much the world talks about freedom. They glory in it, they proclaim it, they boast about it, as they say, they will fight for it, and the very idea of *slavery*, bondage—O the very idea of it is so hateful. Why, did not our forefathers in the days of the great Washington fight for our national freedom? Yes, fought and bled, and many died in defense of it on the battlefield.

That idea of freedom and independence is so natural to all of us that we see everything colored with American freedom and independence.

Did not our great nation fight for it, even for other countries? Does not every civilized country on God's earth despise slavery, and do we not all try to stamp it out wherever it may exist?

All these expressions and wishes are praiseworthy; they reveal to us the inborn gift of true freedom



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which God has given to our human nature, to be free in soul and body, but with the true freedom of His children.

Whatever we have said so far refers to outward freedom or physical freedom, as opposed to bondage or prison life.

But real freedom must go deeper; it must reach the mind and the heart, and unless the mind is lit up by the supernatural truth which Christ brought, and the will and heart be guided by it, we are free only to some extent—outward but not real freedom.

Think you that the martyrs were not free, both in mind and will when tyrants tied them to the stake and burned them, or roasted them alive or inflicted pain or death? O then it was, their souls were set free with the freedom of God.

The darkest prison cell or dungeon cannot take away true freedom. Physical bondage, when inflicted unjustly, gives special lustre and strength to mental and moral freedom.

So it is in the world—no matter how much people may persecute us and revile us, and say evil against us, and call us slaves to duty, and for jus-

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tice sake put us in prison and even to death, rejoice, says our Lord.

True bondage and real slavery were imposed on us by sin, when man's mind became darkened and his heart hardened.

Slavery in every shape or form is detestable, but of the two forms mental and moral slavery is the worse.

Physical or external slavery is detestable, because it is against man's nature to be enslaved, and also because of the harshness and the inhuman treatment the slave receives from the master or tyrant.

But which master can be more harsh or inhuman or brutal—that intellectual blindness—mistaking falsehood for truth, and dark ignorance, not knowing the only true light and principles which alone can guide the mind unto truth, supernatural and divine.

What slavery can be more degrading and debasing than the slavery of the lowest passions of fallen human nature, which when indulged, lower man beneath the level of the brute?

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Fetter a man, chain him hand and foot, pinion him to a rack in a dark dungeon, but let his soul and heart to be free with the freedom of the children of God, and he is no slave, and he is far more free than the tyrant who placed him there.

Is a man, no matter how wealthy or praised and flattered by the world, if he knows not the truth of life or of the hereafter and follows his passions, *free*? Oh, no.

Will you call a babe or child not yet using his mind or will power free? Is it not to be guided by older people, until it is capable of using its own reason, and guide itself by its own will power? As the Apostle says, that the child is under bondage and instructors until it becomes a son.

Now, beloved friends, Christ brought us that real freedom by bringing us to its true knowledge and guidance for our lives, and all those who follow Him become free with the freedom of the children of God. Those who know Him not nor the truth He brought, are slaves just as those who lived before His coming. They may imagine they are free, but are not. Born in supernatural darkness and not reborn in Christ to the new light, they see only this world

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and live for it—the slaves of human sayings and human respect and human ideals and naturally become slaves to passion.

Eternal thanks to Christ, who destroyed all slavery, set us free from the bondwoman and brought us the true freedom in and through Christ our Lord.

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## Passion Sunday

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Letter to the Hebrews. St. Paul says: "Christ being come, a high priest, by His own blood being the mediation of the New Testament."

This is Passion Sunday—the last part of the holy season of Lent—for a more immediate preparation for Easter, and these two coming weeks are appropriately given by the Church to the remembrance of the passion of Jesus Christ, who, as the Apostle says to-day, by His own blood became the high priest and mediator with the Heavenly Father in our behalf.

We must consider the utter helplessness of man to please God, even if man had not fallen.

But by sin, not only were we helpless, but an object of displeasure and condemnation in the sight of God, so that unless something were done for man there was nothing left to him but ruin—temporal and eternal.



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By the mere act of creation we owed God a debt of lasting gratitude or thanks, and how could a mere creature give worthy thanks to an infinite being.

By sin man not only made himself utterly helpless, but made himself so culpable in the sight of God that he was utterly lost unless a divine person would come to his assistance.

The office of giving thanks and of redeeming; that is, to obtain mercy and pardon and grace from God, requires the necessity of priesthood—a priest who will come between us and God and so redeem us that we will become acceptable in His sight.

In other words, we need a priest, one who will offer sacrifice, not, as the Apostle says, the blood of goats or oxen, not mere animal blood, but who will offer a sacrifice to God, worthy of God, and be so acceptable to God in His own personality, that God cannot refuse, that the atonement shall be infinite and supernatural, that God will be so pleased and delighted with it that He will in it and through it and with it bring fallen man unto the fellowship of the divine nature.

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That act of priesthood, so called redemption, was far more necessary for us than the act of creation. By it man was to be uplifted, to be made a new creation, a new man. The face of this fallen earth was to be changed; poverty was to be turned into boundless wealth; the curse into a blessing; every ill into pleasure; every heartache into joy; the black pall of the coffin into snow-white garment of dazzling and eternal splendor; the corpse was to be clothed with immortality; death and sin to be crushed forever.

Philosophy could not do it, for the wisest of this world did not have this redeeming priesthood; laws only flattered vice. In other words, it required the divine touch of God—a divine priesthood.

This the Son of God assumed in His own personality, clothing Himself in human form, so ingeniously harmonizing the divine and human natures into His own divine personality that whatever He did in His divine or human nature was divine, and of infinite merit.

Therefore Jesus Christ, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, underwent real death in His human nature, His soul separating from His body, on

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the cross, and offered to the Father a sacrifice of infinite value and gave Him proof of the greatest love, namely, to give up His own life for the restoration of His honor and glory, and left us the infinite treasury of all His merits.

Christ's priesthood is the elevating power of man to God, and as Christ says no man can come to the Father except through Me, as He is the gate and the mediator with the Father, from which mediator all must obtain the means of salvation, out of Him, no salvation.

All worship must go to the Father through the priesthood of Christ. It is only through Christ that we, and all we say and do, can be made acceptable to the Father.

Hence no other worship can be acceptable, except what Christ our Lord established.

Consider what Jesus has done for us in becoming our priest. He assumed our debt to His Father; He paid it by shedding His own blood; He leaves us all His infinite merits and lets us share most abundantly in these merits through the Sacramental channels.

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He thus infuses into us a new life; does away with sin and all its effects, and brings us near to the Father, and restores immortality, after death, not only for the soul, by giving it endless happiness, but for the body by clothing it with an immortality greater and higher than the one we lost in Adam.

Beloved friends, let our best thanks go forth to Christ; let us be engrafted in His eternal and divine priesthood, so that through His infinite merits and our humble but zealous co-operation we may obtain the crown of eternal glory.

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## Palm Sunday

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The letter from St. Paul to the Philippians. "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross; therefore God exalted him."

No more appropriate words could be spoken to-day about our dear Lord than those I have just quoted. Only look forward into this week—holy week—and the Church holds up her Christ, her founder and model, humbled to the dust of the earth—a worm, and no man, more humble than the humblest of men.

Shall we look to-day at that beautiful, charming virtue, so dear to God, so necessary for salvation—the virtue which Christ, our model, practiced in so striking a manner, evidently to crush our foolish pride, the virtue which every saint of God loved and cherished, for they all knew it well: "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that shall exalt himself shall be humbled."



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The world is full of pride. Oh, but we must not be worldly, nor follow the pride of the world, but the humility of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the model of humility. His whole life, His every word and action teach and inculcate the practice of that virtue. His life is an open rebuke to the pride of the rich, scribe and pharisee.

Pride vitiates everything. God hates the proud and loves the humble. Proof, Lucifer and his followers. Adam and Eve, deceived by Satan under the plea that they would be wise like God; David's complacency and vanity; Goliath, Holophernes, Antiochus, Aman, Tower of Babel, Moab, Pharaoh.

Pride is theft, claiming for ourselves what does not belong to us.

What reason have we to be proud? Look at sins of childhood, sins of riper years, all the sins of our lives—proud of our looks, dress, wealth, and what are these but accidental gifts?

Proud of our intellectual smartness or business capacity. Again, these are nature's gifts. Death will lay them low; a mere accident and all is gone.

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How weak and frail we are. To-day we are what we are; tomorrow we may fall. Behold Solomon; behold King David; how they fell. Peter swore to be faithful to his master and at the sight of a woman he denied Him. Let him who thinks himself to stand take heed lest he fall.

Pride is so abominable in the sight of God. As long as we prefer ourselves to any one we place ourselves before Christ, who took the lowest place and humbled Himself before all. See Him kneeling before Judas at the last supper, washing the feet of that fallen Apostle.

The ways of God are the reverse of the ways of the world; first with God is last with the world; first with the world is last with God.

How foolish it is. We put our small, narrow and limited intellects against that of the Almighty; we place ourselves ahead of Him; we usurp His throne. "I shall place my throne next to that of the Almighty," said the proud Lucifer.

True greatness consists in the clear and perfect knowledge that God is supreme Lord and Master, and that all I and every one else possess are the gifts of God. Humility is truth and justice.

Therefore, when we were admitted into the

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Church by baptism we were asked: "What do you ask of the Church of God?" Our answer was: "Faith, the submission of our intellect to the teachings of God and of His Church."

How beautiful is humility in the Blessed Virgin. Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid, behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He hath dethroned the proud and exalted the humble. All the Saints followed the great lesson: "Learn of Me because I am meek and humble of heart."

How men admire it, even the wicked and the proud try to hide their contemptible natures under the garb of humility. Not only man, but God loves the humble and resisteth the proud.

I cannot exhort you strongly enough, especially to-day, when we enter upon Passion week to reflect seriously upon the humility of Jesus Christ during His sacred passion. See our model humbled to the dust—reviled and crucified. Let us put aside all vanity, self-esteem and especially pride, and let us go under the outstretched arms of the cross, and in all humility ask pardon of Jesus, and promise to imitate Him in that sublime humility which He practiced during His whole life; but especially during His sacred passion and death.

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## Easter Sunday

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The Apostle to-day, addressing his letter to the Corinthians, says: "Christ, our Pasch, is sacrificed."

The great feast of the Jewish people was the Pasch. Christ in the new or in His law makes it the great feast of the Christian.

The great lamb, the true Pascal victim, has been slain for our salvation; but as He predicted clearly all His life, he rose to-day in triumph over death and sin and hell, and stands as the undisputed Master and Ruler of the world—as Christ divine, the Son of the living God.

The sacrifice of Calvary in all its horrors and blood puts the undeniable and indisputable seal upon the Resurrection. If the death of Christ were in any way doubtful; if our Pasch had not been sacrificed, the Resurrection would not stand out in bold relief—beyond all doubt and dispute.

How well the death of Christ was planned. How



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His enemies swore that they had to do away with Him. How they said He was in their way. How they were determined to do away with Him, at any cost. How they rejected every other plan to harm or hinder His mission. Death was to be the only and sure test of His divinity. Let us do away with Him, but let us be sure of it. No other plan could ever satisfy them. If He comes to life He is God; if not, our triumph is complete.

They remembered His three days' promise. The third day after His death was to be the decisive day. If He did not rise then He was an impostor, and they would let the people know and see.

Let us get Him and be sure of His death, and we will do the rest.

Hence His arrest, brought about by a treacherous Apostle, one who knew Him well. So there could be no mistake they hold Him fast; they secure Him in a dungeon, and in broad daylight have Him condemned and see Him die on the cross. Our Pasch is sacrificed as the Apostle says.

His enemies guard His tomb; no one near; the seal of the governor is on the stone.



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His enemies are the first to admit His Resurrection. Our Pasch is sacrificed and the effect of the great sacrifice is the Resurrection.

The two facts of the Crucifixion and of the Resurrection of Christ are the two clearest facts that stand out beyond all doubt or dispute.

No sane man could or would ever deny them or call them into question. The death on the cross, so public, so conspicuous, when thousands of strangers were in the city—witnesses of the fact and of the wonderful darkness and of the earthquake.

We know the exact spot of the burial. Who ever touched the body of the entombed Christ, who opened the tomb? We have the testimony of His own enemies. Who broke the seal? which act constituted a crime of treason. Who ever found any remains of that Christ? Any relic in the shape of bone or any remnant of that body? Where is that body? Where was it taken or carried? Who kept it or destroyed it? The answer for all the centuries of the past says—no one. Christ rose from the tomb. The great crowning act of His great life; the crowning glory of His sacrifice. Our Pasch, as the Apostle says, is sacrificed.

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There stands the risen Christ. Remember He is our model and, as the same Apostle says, "As Christ rose, we shall also rise."

What joy, what happiness to light up this wretched and dark world of ours.

To-day look at life and its trials and troubles. In the light of the Resurrection tears of sorrow are brilliant gems; trials and sacrifices are the great sources of merit and of the Resurrection. Rejoice, brethren, for our Pasch is sacrificed, and by it His triumph and ours are complete and perfect.

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## First Sunday After Easter

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The reading to-day is from a letter which St. John, the beloved Apostle of Jesus, wrote to his people: "Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory which overcometh the world—our faith."

Every word of this beautiful letter should be written in golden characters in our hearts. It tells in a few words the divinity of our faith. Its victory over the world and its wonderful and lasting effect. He that believeth in the Son of God hath the testimony of God in himself.

Faith. Our faith is born of God, for who else except God could teach us anything about truths, which far transcend all human knowledge and understanding.

Who could bring us news and the glad tidings of another world full of happiness which was to last forever?

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Who but God could show us the way and supply us with all the powerful and infallible means to reach it?

Who but God could dispel all the false doctrines and superstitions and the idolatry which covered the earth at His coming?

Who but God could redeem man from that horrible state with his mind weakened and darkened, so as to be blind, totally blind about all supernatural truth, and with the will perverted, lead by the cravings of the worst passions?

What a beautiful gift Christ brought us in bringing faith, divine faith, to us. It opens and widens the mental faculties; opens them to a new light. Let us see things of this world in the light of the supernatural, and of the world to come—a ray from God, from heaven lighting up our path unto divinity.

It unites our intellects with that of God, makes them partake of His infallibility, through the absolute conviction that God cannot err, cannot deceive and will not deceive, but whatever He reveals is infinite and divine truth.

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Of late years we use flashlights—the strong electric beam which is thrown upon an object or person lights it so clearly that we can see it as it is. So the ray of divine light, faith, which comes from God, when thrown upon us and the world around us, lets us see the world and ourselves in the light of God, what we really are.

An act of faith is the most natural and at the same time the most elevating and noblest act, our minds cannot possibly perform, for our mind is made for truth, and there is no truth better suited to the human mind, for both its temporal and eternal welfare than the truths of faith. Besides, the source of knowledge is divine. It is the word of God Himself, truth emanating from His own divine essence—directly manifested to us.

The channel through which we receive it is also infallible, namely, the Church; therefore, He so clearly established it, gave her His own word, that by hearing her we would hear Him, promising that He would be with her until the end of time, and assuring her that error should never prevail against her.

Faith is the first of the three divine virtues,



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uniting us to God through His infinite and infallible knowledge upon which we rely. It goes up to God's veracity, we knowing Him and trusting Him; that is to say, we not only believe Him but believe in Him.

God always gave the world evident outward and tangible proof of faith, but especially by sending His only begotten Son into the world, who proved His divinity so clearly by His life, by His miracles, and especially by His death and resurrection, that no reasonable man, who investigates honestly the doings of Christ, can have the slightest doubt of His divinity, and therefore of the faith which He brought us from the Father.

That true faith in Christ was the occasion of most of His miracles. How often did He not say: "Thy faith hath made thee whole. I have not found such faith in Israel."

But faith must be practical, for without good works it is dead.

See the wonderful effects of practical faith in Christ, as St. John says in to-day's letter: "He that believeth in the Son of God hath the testimony of God in Himself."

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Proof of these words: See the lives of the Apostles, the martyrs, confessors, virgins and all the saints of God; see children naturally timid act like heroes, strengthened by that faith; see the effect upon the soul of the babe, which dies before reason dawns. It is an heir and co-heir of Jesus Christ unto His own kingdom.

The most learned men of God tell us that faith is a gift, for, strictly speaking, God owes us nothing, and therefore if we do not profit by it, but by sin we squander it, God takes it away, and we fall back to naturalism and very frequently become far worse than if we never had the faith.

Therefore, we must thank God for that precious gift which enables us to reach Him, and we must make every effort not to squander or lose it, but to increase and perfect it, until we shall see God, face to face, and not merely, as we do now, by reason elevated through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord.

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## Second Sunday After Easter

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The letter to-day is from St. Peter. He tells us that Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow His steps.

The great object of sending to us His beloved Son, and letting Him live in our midst like one of us, and preach to us, and finally suffer and die for us, was to place that Son before us as our model—the model of the elect or chosen ones—the type of all those who would be saved; the leader of Christianity, so that we can only call ourselves Christians or imitators of Jesus Christ in so far as we resemble Him. That resemblance is necessary for salvation.

This is perfectly clear from what St. Paul preaches: “Those whom He foreknew to be similar to the image of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, He predestined to life everlasting.”

All the Church teaches, all her sacraments, her devotions, her services, simply are intended to re-

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produce in our souls the image of Jesus Christ, the image of the divine being, through the workings of the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier. Understand this well. It means to make us Christlike.

It is only on account of Christ that man and the whole of creation was made acceptable to God, and it is only through Christ that God will hear our prayers and bless us and crown us.

Now, unless God sees in us a resemblance to His only begotten Son, He will not recognize us as His own.

Therefore, Christ was perfect with the divine perfection of the Father, and the charming perfection of the perfect man.

But how can we know Christ? Which knowledge is necessary, not only for salvation, but even for our natural perfection—our becoming true and genuine and civilized and cultured men. St. Paul calls all knowledge outside of the knowledge of Christ as worthless—not to glory except in Jesus Christ.

It is self-evident that we cannot know Christ unless we study His life, and thereby acquire the deep-

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est supernatural and the clearest natural knowledge of that God-man.

The Father sent Him faultless, so that no man can possibly find any flaw or shortcoming in Him, so that He is the perfect model.

The study of Christ, His divine and human nature, especially His divine personality, is so beautiful and elevating that we cannot possibly study Him without knowing Him, and when we know Him we cannot help loving Him, and when we love Him, we cannot help longing to be like Him; that is, to imitate Him.

The natural desire to be like great men whom we happen to meet, can only find its satisfaction in Jesus Christ, for no matter how great and brilliant human beings may appear to us at first, after a while—after a better acquaintance, we find “that there is nothing perfect under the sun—there are flaws, foibles and defects.”

Not with Christ. The more knowledge we acquire about Him, the more we wish to learn and know; in all cases, but especially in His, truth is stranger than fiction.



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In Him there is sublime manliness—at the same time that divine gentleness. His manner is so attractive to saint and sinner alike. Even when He rebukes, the sinner cannot take it amiss.

Every true Christian who tried to become like our Lord, judged and spoke and acted like Him—so it should be. Christians should be other Christs; yes, like their Master, and thus let the light of God, of Christ, of the Gospel shine before men.

That beautiful, that clear and heavenly knowledge of Christ must then be acquired; otherwise we cannot be true followers of Jesus Christ; now, where can we obtain it?

Thank God, brethren, we have the life of Jesus, from His humble birth in a stable, to His terrible death upon the cross, written by holy men under the protection and guidance of the Holy Ghost, in that grandest of all books—the Bible. It is *the book*. How anxious Mother Church is about our reading it. Her priests read the divine office every day; the greater part of which is taken from that great book. Every Sunday and holiday of obligation, every pastor reads to his congregation, both the

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letter from one of the Apostles and the Holy Gospel—all parts of the Bible.

But on to-day, as Christ is placed before us, as our model, in the beautiful letter of St. Peter, I exhort you frequently, if possible daily, to read a part, say one chapter of the life of Jesus as it is written in the holy book by the four evangelists.

Before reading call upon the assistance of the Holy Ghost, who, as you know, is the sanctifier of our souls—that is, He is anxious to come into our souls, and work there to imprint on them the image of Jesus Christ, the knowledge and love of Jesus, so that the Father will recognize us as His own.

It is difficult, and for some of you impossible, to come to Church as often as you might desire. Well, dear friends, have patience. But I say that your church then is your soul; drink in the knowledge and the love of Jesus by carefully reading the life of our Lord, pausing, reflecting and comparing your conduct with His.

I dare say that if any Christian, Oh, if you, my dear ones in Christ, would do this, you would like it; aye, love it. Your minds would learn to think

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or meditate about the God-man; the Holy Ghost would fill your minds and hearts with his knowledge and his grace; the world would become Christianized—that is, really civilized; the charity of God and the neighbor would fill our souls and we would follow in the steps of Jesus.

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## Third Sunday After Easter

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My beloved friends, both the letter and the Gospel of to-day are so beautiful and so full of Christian perfection that I would like very much to call your attention to some of the sayings of the Apostles or of Jesus Himself. Well, I will not forget to do this on another Sunday.

But to-day our dear Mother, the Church, gathers us here near the altar, to do special honor to one of her greatest saints, one whom Jesus and the Blessed Mother loved so much.

When we celebrated Christmas he was almost lost in the divinity of the babe, and the splendors of the young, divine and charming mother, who stood by the manger.

You know to whom I refer, do you, to Holy Joseph, a saint so dear and near to Jesus and Mary. Therefore the Church calls upon us to do him honor on this special Sunday, set apart for him as the pro-

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tector of Jesus and Mary, and the protector of the whole Church, and of all its members.

God alone is the true judge of sanctity. He alone is Holiness itself, and the nearer we are to Him the holier we are.

The Church has her list of saints—so-called calendar—on it she has wonder-workers, who come before the world, and by their inspired gifts arouse the multitudes and make them kneel before the standard of the cross; work miracles and like beacon lights illumine the world.

There are others on that list, and they never preached; never worked a miracle; never came before the world, but led the inner or, as it is called, hidden life; and oh, their sanctity—such for instance was the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, Queen of Apostles and Martyrs and of all the saints.

To this class belongs St. Joseph. He is God's choice; to Holy Joseph God will confide, put under his care and protection the two most sacred treasures that Heaven gave to earth—the Son of the living God and His young, spotless, pure Virgin Mother. This choice may give us some slight glimpse of the holiness of St. Joseph.



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What means this—to place the babe and child and boy and man, Jesus, and His most blessed Mother under his care? It means to live with them for about twenty-seven years and labor for them, support them, be ever in their presence, drink in from them the purest and holiest love for God and man, for Jesus and His Mother.

It cannot be denied that the presence and example and prayer and conversation and advice of a true, pure, noble woman, refine and elevate man. Friends, what about the impressions and noble emotions and divine and pure human love, the Blessed Virgin so charmingly pure and so intensely sweet, produced on the mind and heart of holy Joseph? Could any one of us poor creatures form an idea of this?

No use of my referring to the effects, divine and human, which Jesus produced on the soul of holy Joseph. Was it not for him perpetual adoration and love so deep, so enravishing that his soul felt more true devotion and divine love than most, if not all, the saints of God?

Behold holy Joseph holding Jesus in his arms, leaning the child against his heart, letting it nestle

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and sleep there. He held the Savior of the world, the Messiah, the Creator. What then passed in his soul angels could not tell.

And when he saw his immaculate spouse, the young mother, holding her Jesus—friends, words fail me. Let us reflect, let us see that holy family and kneel down in ecstasy of wonder and be wrapt in deep prayer.

And these two called him Father, so said the will of the heavenly Father. Joseph here on earth was for them to take the place of their heavenly Father.

If to be with Jesus and Mary and to live with them and for them; if prayer and meditation and a life sacrificed for Jesus and Mary means sanctity, then holy Joseph stands amongst the first of all saints. Jesus loved him so; so did the Blessed Mother, and they kept him near them as a father.

How wisely then did the successors of St. Peter, our holy Fathers, the Popes, tell us to go to Joseph. You can readily see why they confided the church, the mystic body of Jesus, to St. Joseph, and why we celebrate that feast to-day.

Let me call upon you all to-day, dear ones in Christ. Let me say to you, go to Joseph.

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As I have told you, we must be like our Lord; we should know Him well. Ah, then, ask holy Joseph to teach you the great virtue of his life—love for Jesus and Mary.

Place your families under the guardianship of that holy patron. In all your necessities call upon him as Jesus and Mary did, and, oh, may you die as he did in the arms of the Blessed Virgin, resting his head upon the heart of Jesus—die the death of the Just.

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## Fourth Sunday After Easter

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To-day we read from the letter of the Apostle St. James. I take the last words of to-day's reading: "With meekness receive the engrafted word which is able to save your souls."

A very serious question which is very often asked is this: Why is it that there is so much preaching, so many exhortations, and yet, comparatively speaking, there are so few good and genuine Christians who live up to their religion?

The Apostle St. James advises us to receive the word of God with meekness, that is, in self-possession, with composure, with docility, meek like a lamb that follows the shepherd and hears his voice and recognizes that voice and follows him.

St. James tells us that it is the engrafted word, beautiful thought, for our natures by sin were made barren, unproductive like a barren tree, growing wild, producing no fruit and only fit to be burned.

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By engrafting the word of God into our natures we received the grace of God, which is able to save our souls; that is, after receiving it we are made fruitful and can produce fruit in abundance for life everlasting.

That grace or word of God is able to save us, but will not do so against our will, for it never forces the free will.

It is like good and powerful medicine prescribed by an excellent and experienced physician; that medicine is able to cure us, but we must do our part—we must take it as prescribed and follow the given directions.

We can take other medicine and luxuries and things that flatter our palate and taste, and thereby destroy the effect of the medicine, no matter how good and curative it may be, and upset all the plans of the doctor.

There is no doubt that the word of God is the best and most powerful and infallible medicine for our souls, for it was prescribed and brought down from heaven by the best and most infallible physician of our souls, who knows us, and therefore understands what is best for us.



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Therefore we should receive it as St. James says, in meekness. Let us make this clear to ourselves. Blessed, says our Lord, are the meek, and as the Psalmist says, He shall exalt the meek.

Unless we watch ourselves carefully and examine our consciences thoroughly but calmly, we are all very apt to become restless, nervous, always busy with something that annoys us, fills our minds with anxiety and our hearts with a restlessness which robs us of our peace of soul.

We are strangers to that gentle Christian peace of a soul, which is self-possessed, and when we cease to be busy, our minds, relieved from excitement, naturally should be quiet. It is then our minds instinctively turn to our troubles. In the quiet which fills the church of God during services—such as mass and the sermon—our minds are far away from God. We are restless, we have not got our minds on God or the word of God. We may hear the sermon, but the word of God cannot become engrafted in our soul.

Unless our souls are set free, that is, disengaged from worldly cares and troubles, the word of God cannot find entrance.

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The word of God is the principal and only solid food for the mind, and if we deprive ourselves of it by our restlessness and fretful disposition, which is ever distracting us, we grow weak in our faith, we find no relish in the hearing of the word, we become tired and wearisome, and we try to avoid going to church to hear sermons or instructions.

We get angry with some one, or we carry in our hearts some ill feeling or spite against some one; oh, we cannot bear the sight of that man or woman in the church; oh, there is no use listening to the sermon. Why we cannot. Do receive the word of God in meekness.

We are worldly. We go to church to be seen, to let others see us, to have our dress admired. We like to go to balls and dangerous amusements. We love to frequent the saloon. We are neglectful of our duty. Our souls are in a constant turmoil. What is the use, we ask, to go to church. We do not like the sermons; they are too simple; they only disturb the peace of our minds. Oh, do receive the word of God in meekness.

Further, perhaps the priest who preached struck home to you, severely condemned, as he should,

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some vice or sin. His words seemed to you like burning coals coming to devour your sins, which you hide so well by a polished exterior. Now you are surely restless. Oh, you feel like leaving the church. You have no use for that priest. You want some one else to preach the Gospel to you. I repeat, poor soul, receive the word of God in meekness.

God is never in commotion or excitement. His word enters the calm soul so easily, so gently, and yet so efficaciously, as St. James says, it is able to save your soul.

How Mother Church teaches you and reminds you of this, to free your souls from all care and distraction. When you enter her threshold, by placing the holy water font, from which you take the blessed water, to bless yourself with it, that you have entered the church of God, leaving all worldliness and care outside.

Do you understand the blessing which I give to you all, just before mass on Sundays? I sprinkle you with holy water to have your souls cleansed from all other care save that of your salvation, and

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thus prepare your souls to hear the word of God in meekness.

Prepare your souls well then when you come to hear the word of God; prepare that soul by prayer and calm of soul so that the word will be engrafted and produce a hundred fold here and hereafter.

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## Fifth Sunday After Easter

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To-day we continue our reading from the letter of St. James. For the subject of my remarks to-day I take the first words: "Dearly beloved, be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

The world is full of hearers of the word, but how few are, as St. James says, doers of the word.

If we were to practice only one-tenth of what we hear, how good, fervent and pious we would be.

There are people who have been hearing sermons from their childhood and now have reached a good old age, and yet they are not doers of the word.

Many boast of this, that they know the whole doctrine of the church, that they have heard sermons all their lifetime, and heard the great speakers and missionaries, and yet they do not practice what they have heard.

They are those of whom our Lord spoke, when



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in the parable one man received only one talent or coin. He buried it, he did not labor with it, and when the Master came to call him to an account, he brought the talent, but was condemned for burying it and not making good use of it. What shall it profit such men to know what they should do, and who do not do it? Are they not very guilty in the sight of God?

As St. James remarks, the word is like a mirror—in it we can see what we are in the sight of God. In examining ourselves in that mirror we will acquire correct and true knowledge of ourselves. In the instructions which are given we can very easily see how we stand with God, but as the apostle says, we must acquire that knowledge in order to apply it to ourselves.

If any one would use the looking glass and see spots on the face or dress, and then go away and forget all about these blemishes, what good would it do to use the mirror?

Very often we may become attentive to the sermon; we may be impressed with what is said, but no sooner do we leave the church, even though we may make some remarks about it, than we forget,

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and it may be that we even try to forget, because the impression the sermon has made upon us is not very pleasing to our self-love.

Such people hear the word, but unto their own perdition.

When men in business hear anything that will prevent failures, or that will increase their success, such as a sure means of making more money, or making up for past losses, how quickly they adopt these means and change their business methods. How true the words of our Lord—the children of the world are wiser than the children of light.

Pilots on vessels are ever watching for beacon lights, which are to guide them through the dangerous places on the sea and on rivers. How carefully they steer, following very exactly the directions of those lights, and how do we act? The beacon light of the soul, the word we hear, and in it we see the true way to follow, and the dangers which we should avoid, and yet we do not do it.

We all like to hear what we call a good sermon, a fine speech, especially when a nice priest gives it. We admire him. He is as the world calls it, a nice, elegant gentleman of very fine appearance; he

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speaks very fluently; he is an orator; he uses very choice language, is flowery, poetical; he is a real actor; then above all, is so entertaining people flock from all sides to hear him. Oh, how well we listen. The effect with us is only to praise and to admire, but we remain inactive; we are not doers of the word.

There is nothing so foolish and laughable and self-deceiving as a person who will stand before a looking glass, perhaps for hours. The person is not really beautiful; it is a very common face, rather ugly, and the form is anything but symmetrical or perfect, and yet such people will imagine or flatter themselves that they are nice looking or have a nice appearance, and they even make comparisons with others, and think that they are not so bad looking as others. Well, friends, what about flattering ourselves in sermons and instructions; that all this applies to others; that it is splendid for such and such a one, but we do not apply it to ourselves?

If you had no looking glass at home, would you not go to the store or to town perhaps to buy one? Why, you must have one, and you could not get along without one. You must see how you look; you are careful about your appearance before men,

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and you act rightly. But what about your appearance in the sight of God? Should you not be more careful about Him than about men and women.

We should therefore use the mirror of God in which we must examine ourselves carefully, and when we see the light, guide our actions by it, as the Magi when they saw the star of Bethlehem.

How strikingly does St. James explain all this by his words: "He that hath looked into the perfect law of liberty, and hath continued therein, not becoming a forgetful hearer but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

Thank God, we have the perfect law of liberty, the sublime law of the Gospel as explained to us by the apostles, and left to us in their inspired writings. Let us hear the word with attention and reverence, and be doers of the word in the perfect law of liberty, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

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## Ascension Day

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The feast of to-day is the triumph of Jesus, to enter as God-man into heaven, and as God-man to return to the bosom of the Father.

Easter is the basis of our hope; to-day's feast shows us the fulfillment of that hope, for our Lord goes to heaven, there to prepare our future home. There are many mansions, he said, in the Home of my Father.

Our Lord must leave us, that is, withdraw from our midst, his visible and tangible presence, as He said Himself: "It is expedient for you that I go, for if I do not go, the Paraclete will not come." We would not listen to the church or her ministers. We would never be satisfied unless we would see Jesus himself, to preach to us, to hear our confession, to give us the other sacraments.

It is the greatest chance of practicing our faith. He guaranteed it by His own divine promise—fear not, I will be with you, and He who hears you hears me.



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The place from which Jesus ascended into heaven is Mount Olivet. From it Calvary could be plainly seen. The disciples and the Blessed Mother have gathered there, for He told them to come there.

To them, full of sadness and grief, He gave His farewell words. They listen most attentively. He told them He was going to the Father, and He would then send to them the Holy Ghost. Whilst His dear ones on earth were sorrowing, limbo and heaven were rejoicing, for the Son of God, now God-man, was to return to the Father who sent Him, the souls of the just were to enter into heaven on to-day as the first fruit of the redemption, following Jesus into the joys of His Kingdom.

As he stood upon the mount, and they knelt around Him, He gave them His last blessing, and then He rose from the earth to lead captivity captive, the conqueror of death and sin, to enter in triumph into the Kingdom which He had conquered for us by His passion and death. The great army of angels, all the souls of the just delivered from limbo called upon the heavens to lift their gates, for the King of glory came to enter into His Kingdom.

Impossible to describe the meeting of Jesus and those souls who had been detained in limbo, their

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joy and their happiness, their thanksgiving, but God alone can tell the meeting of the three divine persons when the Son returned to them with His human nature, thus uniting that human nature unto the divine, and placing it in heaven as the model of all the elect, and the link which bound man to God by creation, and which had been broken by sin was reunited, and man lifted and raised into the divine nature by the redemption went into heaven in and through the assumed human nature of Jesus Christ.

To-day let me repeat to you the words which the priest recites every day at the altar: Raise your hearts on high. Yes, behold Jesus, the conqueror, our brother, seated at the right hand of the Father, clothed in glory, divine and everlasting. He is the light of heaven, and if eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor any heart hath ever conceived what God has in store for His loved ones in heaven, then I say, how utterly beyond all our loftiest thoughts and most brilliant imaginations is the joy and happiness and glory of Jesus. Man, so to speak, is made divine. A redemption has been accomplished which could never have been planned or performed except by a divine person.

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The Son, during his mortal life here upon earth, had glorified the Father, he lived for Him. Now the Father glorifies the Son for all eternity. How encouraging. Christ is our model if we live a Christian life. Imitate our model, Jesus Christ. The Father will reward us with an eternal reward.

When Jesus told us that there are many mansions in the Kingdom of this Father, he meant that each and every mansion shall be given to us in proportion to our merit.

The measure of our glory in heaven shall be in proportion as we resemble Jesus Christ here on earth.

The ascension of our Jesus into heaven shows us why we are here in this world. The beautiful messengers from God who stood near the blessed Mother and the apostles told them. Why do stand here idle, friends? Life is so precious. At every moment of time we can increase our merit and reward in the Kingdom of our Father.

If we love Jesus we will long to be where He is in heaven, and although we will live here upon earth as long as the will of God desires it, yet this earthly life will be like a burden, a prison, a hindrance

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which has to be endured with patience and resignation, but we look up to Jesus in heaven as to our true Father, awaiting us in our true home—heaven.

This most encouraging and consoling doctrine of our faith so clearly made manifest in the feast of to-day, should give us strength in the hour of trial. Poor human life, a real struggle upon earth, tears of babyhood, tears of childhood, bitter tears of riper years, tears around the coffin of the dear one, tears when poverty comes and we have not wherewith to feed the hungry little ones who ask for a piece of bread; tears around the sick bed; oh, truly we live in a vale of tears. Look up into heaven, see how our model acquired all that glory by his sufferings, and the sweet solacing grace of the passion of Jesus will bring grace superabundant, and the cross will be light and the merit and glory everlasting in the Kingdom of our Father.



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## Sunday Within the Octave of the Ascension

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St. Peter in his admirable letter of to-day inculcates charity, especially in using hospitality one towards another without murmuring, so that he says: "In all things God may be honored through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Far be it from me to tell you that you neglect hospitality, but I have good reasons to think that in most cases it is merely a question of entertaining some, as you call them, nice neighbors or friends, some wealthy people, and you want to make a show, a good impression, so that your visitors will praise you and call you generous, and that you entertained them well, but there was no supernatural motive whatever.

Our entertaining was not perhaps like that of the first Christians, the lovefeast during which the greatest hospitality was practiced, for there was a good opportunity to show their consideration and true esteem for one another.



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How these Christians realized the words of our Lord—whatsoever you do to the least of mine I shall consider as done to myself. It was all heart-felt, because they loved one another as children of their common Father, God, through the fellowship of Jesus Christ.

I must say to you, friends, that this is a great Christian duty, and if you do these hospitable actions for the sake of our Lord, your reward shall be great in the Kingdom of your Father.

The best proof that you are a hospitable Christian, that it comes from the heart prompted by a Christian motive, is the manner in which you perform all these good and kind actions, and speak kind words to those at home, the home circle.

Dear friends, were you to entertain strangers from morning till night, and work hard for them, and pass sleepless nights on account of it, thus sacrificing yourself, and yet should neglect those at home, you would incur the just reproach that he who neglects his household has lost the faith.

It is the home where, through Christian motives, your hospitality should be practiced, so that the home for its inmates, parents and children, becomes

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the place they love best, and are most anxious to be, in the bosom of the family.

My dear friends, we should live to make one another happy—friends, neighbors, even strangers, but our best love and service should go to those at home.

If we would all do this, oh, how happy our homes would be, how the Christian spirit of union and brotherly love would dwell amongst us.

Our greatest kindness, our sweetest gentleness, in words and actions should be for our own. There is Christianity, there is the home of happiness, that is the life which God wants us to lead.

Now the majority of people are everything for visitors. They will go to extremes for them, work hard, prepare everything so carefully, the house and even the sidewalk get a thorough cleaning, the parlor is perfect, the bedroom is spotless, the linen immaculate. Wherever the visitor has to go, is so well cleaned. Why, it will be a pleasure to him. If there is anything wanting in linen or silverware, or glass or even bed-clothing, well, that is borrowed for the occasion.

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Were I to see you busy I would imagine that you read this letter of St. Peter most carefully, and that you are truly hospitable; that you look upon your visitor as a Christian, another Christ, for whose sake you are willing to sacrifice yourself for the good of others.

But, dearly beloved, do you really do, and are you really as anxious to do, for your own at home, your own flesh and blood, what you are doing for the visitor who will be with you a day or two, whilst your own are with you always? It is to them you owe more than to any stranger; it is on them that you should make that good and lasting impression, so that you will learn to appreciate home more and more, and live in greater charity and love.

Familiarity has begotten neglect and contempt. Home is not what it should be. When a stranger comes, the very best of everything is prepared. How careful we are about our appearance; even the children are dressed neatly for the time being. They are told what to say, how to greet the stranger, how to behave in his presence, and when the visitor comes, oh, how we greet them! A thousand welcomes; words are not strong enough to express our great pleasure (and often we do not mean it at all). But when our own

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come home, perhaps from work or other duties, even from a visit, we scarcely notice them; we do not even give them a smile; rather, if the weather should happen to be bad, and if they are not very careful, we have a scolding ready for them. Of course in the visitor we mind nothing—mud, spilling eatables or drink, why, that is all right.

What kind words we have for them. In general I might say that whilst visiting we get kind treatment. Well, the heathens did this, but as soon as we come home, and often we hate to go there, it is unkindness and neglect. How wrong this is.

My dear friends, judge what impression all this makes on your husband or wife and children. Cleanliness is Godliness, and true charity is genuine Christianity, and if you will make your homes what they should be, you will culture yourself and all those at home unto true civilization—Christian influence.

Our best words, from the heart, words of excuse, words of appreciation, words of kindness and genuine charity, not flattery, should be for those at home. Is it not the case, however, that having lost all respect and devotion for those at home, we speak to them like demons, but as to strangers, like angels.

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O friends, give me the home, although there may be no wealth, no great display of dishes and ornaments; no, an humble home. Perhaps there is only bread and butter, but there are smiling and loving faces, the little is served with neatness and love, the best there is, is served to the loved ones at home. All there is of kindness and love in the heart stays in the home for the sake of Jesus Christ. That home is the home God loves and Jesus indwells.



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## Pentecost Sunday

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The days of the Pentecost are complete. The fiftieth day after Easter has dawned, and the Blessed Virgin, surrounded by the apostles, were awaiting the fulfillment of the promise of their dear Master, who ten days ago promised to send the Holy Ghost.

And He comes. The blessed Mother with outstretched hands heavenward leads the prayer of the apostles, and suddenly He comes to make known His presence, a powerful wind encircles the hall, fiery tongues appear above the head of each one; they are filled with the Holy Ghost, the burning love of God. The paraclete whom Christ had promised has come, and the love of God is infused in the hearts of those who received Him in person, and He brought with Him the seven fold gift of God.

He comes in person and hovers over the mystic body of Jesus, the Church, and like the breath of God, the Creator breathed into the lifeless body of Adam an immortal soul, so the Holy Spirit comes to

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Pentecost came to the Apostles; Pentecost comes to each individual on Confirmation day just as Jesus called down the Holy Ghost upon His apostles, so when the bishop outstretches his consecrated hands to heaven, and calls down the Holy Spirit, Jesus sends him and he comes, the third person of the Blessed Trinity, and stamps upon that soul a mark which tells that this soul is his own, and imparts a strength which is of God, a strength that baffles all the snares and powers of flesh and blood and Satan combined. It is the gift of fortitude.

Passions are strong, and the deceitful and the cunning demons and our own natural weakness in unguarded moments have overcome us and we fall. There we lie in sin unable to help ourselves. But the Holy Spirit moves that soul, all the sacramental graces shall not be in vain. That soul is stirred with true repentance; the heart, broken with sorrow, pours out its tears of contrition; the fear of God, the beginning of wisdom, has taken possession of that soul. Father, I have sinned against heaven and thee. Here comes the Holy Ghost, and when the words of absolution are spoken He cleanses that soul as clean as if it never sinned.

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The day is bright and sunny. Near God's altar that morning stands a modest young girl clad in garments of joy. Near her stands the virtuous young man who offers to stand by her through life to protect her virtue, to be one until death do them part. The pastor stands by as the witness of the church, who will declare that at God's altar, during the solemn sacrifice of the mass, they are really man and wife. Then the Holy Ghost, by his special grace of that sacrament, unites them into one, even as Jesus and His Church are one, and strengthens their souls with graces strong and lasting, to be Christians, to be father and mother unto the honor and glory and propagation of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Impressed by the holiness of the sanctuary, inspired by a special whispering of the Holy Ghost, a young man leads a pure life, his aspirations lead him into the sanctuary of God. Ordination day comes, and whilst lying prostrate at the foot of the altar, and the bishop holds outstretched hands over him, the Holy Ghost, like He did to the Apostles on to-day, fills that soul with superhuman strength and powers. He lifts him above the natural; He makes him another Christ to perpetuate the mission of the Son of God, a man-God, so to speak. He

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steps up to the altar and speaks words divine, and Jesus comes. Like Christ he forgives sin, he fulfills the command of Christ, he preaches, he baptizes those committed to his care. Truly another Christ in our midst.

And our day has come and the hour is near when we must bid farewell to earth. Death is agonizing us; the priest of God comes to us to give us our last Holy Communion. Oh, may we receive it with even greater fervor, devotion and purity than when we received it for the first time. But more, he anoints all our senses with consecrated oil. It is our great battle for life eternal. Our arch enemy, the devil, is at hand, but so also is the Holy Ghost, and whilst the sacred minister of God administers that sacrament to us dying, great strength of will power is given to us from above. The grace of strength is so powerful that our wills are proof against all snares and temptations of the evil one. The Holy Ghost has done his work. He has put his seal of sanctity upon our soul. The image of Christ is there reflecting the beauty of God as rechristened in us by the work of the Holy Spirit. Our body fails, our soul leaves earth for heaven.

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And so he sanctifies each soul, every member of the church of Jesus, and thus the whole church, to bring the part militant unto the part triumphant with the Father, Son and Holy Ghost forever.



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## Trinity Sunday

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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Last Sunday the Church celebrated the coming down of the Holy Ghost upon the Blessed Mother and the Apostles, and the Spirit of God filled the whole earth.

To-day, supposing that we, her children, have been filled with the same Holy Spirit, she places before us the adorable mystery of the most Blessed Trinity, to-day being called Trinity Sunday, or the Sunday set apart for that feast.

Incomprehensible above all human understanding, because it is the nature of God and therefore infinite, and as such a most appropriate object of our faith. Yes, it is a mystery; that is, our finite intellects cannot adequately understand it, but although above, yet not against our intellect.

There is but one intellect which can perfectly and completely grasp the divine nature of God, and that is the divine intellect.

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And what does the holy Mother Church teach us about God, the Trinity, the three divine persons in that one divine nature?

Can your mind, even if you allow your imagination full scope, go back into the past and further and further, and stretch across millions and millions of centuries? Repeat that process, and spend a lifetime in going back further and further. Did you exhaust the eternal? Impossible. God is. What folly to pile up centuries by the millions. It is not even a drop in the shoreless, boundless ocean of eternity.

Now God simply *is*, *was* and will be, belong to us; we were and will be; God is. Yet in our way of speaking, for human, finite language cannot express what God is, He always is from all eternity. Our thought cannot reach this through imagination, but forces us to say, if God, he must be eternal. He has no beginning. He simply is the very simplicity and absoluteness of being, eternal, self-existing being, having within Himself the very reason why He and He alone is eternal, therefore absolute, necessary, beyond all created things, He the cause of them all. Let us ask the Holy Ghost to understand God in as

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far as human intellect can reach truth eternal and divine.

That eternal God, because God, must possess all knowledge in an infinite idea or image of Himself, expressing Himself in a perfect and complete and adequate idea, not passing nor diminishing, not created, but absolutely necessary to the very nature of God. He must be self-known, self-expressed in that eternal image of His own divine being, by and in the divine being, truly the image of God's being; there is God the Son begotten by and in the divine intellect, which could not possibly exist *one* second or moment without expressing that divine image, hence God the Son, the image of the being of the Father, being perfectly like the Father, is equal to Him, is as eternal as the Father, equal in every divine perfection of the Godhead, of the one divine nature.

But how could the eternal Father see His own divine image, God the Son, and the Son, His own divine Father, without an eternal love uniting the two in an eternal union, for the Father could not be one second without seeing His divine Son, and the two could not be for one second without loving each other by an eternal, absolute and infinite love. That love is the Holy Ghost, truly called the love of God,

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the necessary and absolute personality of the Holy Ghost who unites Father and Son in the one divine nature or essence.

The divine nature or essence is not the Father, not the Son, nor the Holy Ghost, as distinct essences or natures, but in that essence or nature the three divine persons are and constitute in their eternal union the one divine essence.

O depth of the mysteries of God! How unfathomable and yet so simple. Could a child imagine a rational human being without expressing in his mind an image of himself and loving it? Cannot a child, by self-consciousness, easily understand that it can think and recall the past and look into the future, and exercise its will power, thus exercising three distinct faculties in the one soul, the very image of the adorable Trinity?

The day is clear, a strong, brilliant sun is shining directly into a clear, calm ocean. It is a perfect mirror. There is the sun's image in that stream, reflected perfectly, and the warm rays which the sun pours upon the stream are reflected back to the sun in light and heat. See those rays of light and heat. They form in the sea the perfect image of the King



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of day, and the heat comes back from that ocean, vibrating back towards the source whence they came, and the sun and his image are united and acted and reacted upon by the stream of light and heat. Comparison very material, yet it is only by comparison that we poor, finite creatures can catch a slight glimpse of the divinity.

Stand before a perfect mirror. There is your image, clear and perfect. Every motion, every look, every smile is returned as given by the original. A few rays of light cast upon the mirror and they are reflected. Oh, but in God, infinite perfection, essentially spirit, mirrors itself in its own divine intellect, not at a distance like the sun from the ocean, nor the person from the mirror, but essentially one with infinite unity. Hence God is simplicity itself. All is but one act, and yet in that one divine nature or essence, by that one eternal, simple, divine act there are the three divine persons.

A pure, true, saintly soul kneels in prayer. She seems to see God; she does; her faith holds Him so near her. She needs not even a picture to remind her. She realizes the divine presence. Her will leans upon God's word through the promise of Christ. There is her confidence or hope, through



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prayer, and her heart warms to God in divine charity. She is filled with the three divine or so-called theological virtues; she reaches the Trinity; she reflects the three divine persons in her soul.

When the second person of the Blessed Trinity assumed our human nature, because the three divine persons are essentially inseparable, we say God, through the personality of the Son, assumed our nature.

In Holy Communion Jesus comes to us, yes, through His body and blood. The personality of the second person must be there, for his two natures are inseparable, and because the divine persons are inseparable really and truly, God comes to us through the personality of Jesus, the God-man.

Brethren, how we poor creatures are assumed by and through Christ into the adorable Trinity, rather than study or indulge in deep theological discussion, in true humble submission and faith in the word of God, let us say, I believe, and for proof of it I have the divine influence of that blessed Trinity in my heart through the elevating power of the Church.

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## Second Sunday After Pentecost

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To-day we read from the letter of St. John. He says: "He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother in need, and shall put up his bowels from him, how doth the charity of God abide in him?"

You readily see from these words that as Christians we must love the poor and be charitable towards them.

How we are charmed when some one gifted strikes a musical instrument. Every fibre and nerve within us vibrate, and our souls are lifted up from mere matter.

The most soul-stirring instrument is the human heart. There is but one cord strung upon it. It can vibrate in every key, and to every note, it is *love*.

The human heart cannot live without it. Love is the life of the heart. It leads it, it stirs it, it makes

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it grow heroic, and it knows no sacrifice too great. It conquers all.

How beautifully and naturally it unites mother and child, sister and brother, father and mother, friends and relatives, those who are kind to us, those who are beautiful.

But in all these, is there not a return to self? Do we not really love ourselves in them?

Love is divine, and unless the touch of divinity is in it, unless there is the supernatural underlying it, it is only self-love.

God loves us not for self-interest or for any benefit to be derived from it for Himself, but from condescension, and from His desire to make us happy. So Jesus loves us for the sake of His Father. There is Christian charity or love for the poor; there is the practical expression of what Christ taught and His Apostle expressed when he said: Religion, clean and undefiled, before God and the Father is this—to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation (St. James).

The practice of our holy religion is beautiful and consoling, especially when you have a nice church,



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well furnished, and an elegant altar, the little light shining upon the door of the tabernacle. Oh, how nice it is to kneel before the altar and adore Jesus and drink in, with a loving heart, the many holy inspirations which books and sermons cannot reveal, to hear Mass, to be at Benediction, to receive Holy Communion. It is all so nice.

Yes, and our fervent feelings always make us bold. We want to bring flowers; we get leave to take care of the altar; the linen is so spotless; the vestments are in perfect condition. Why? It all belongs to Jesus, and we cannot do enough. Thank God, brethren, we have such people in our midst who do this, and I as pastor appreciate it very much, and bless those who do all these loving actions for our Lord.

And yet there is so much consolation and spiritual joy arising from all this, but, oh, let us remember what Jesus said: What you shall do to the least of mine I will consider as done to myself.

We must learn to see Jesus in the poor, to go to them in their poverty, to console them and help them for the sake of Jesus, giving to them as we would give to Jesus, and not letting our left hand

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know what our right hand gives. Here is true religion—practical Christianity.

To love the poor, to sympathize with them, to speak kind, consoling words to them is the noblest trait of the human heart if all these things be done for the sake of Jesus Christ.

No reward is to be expected for all this in this world. I mean temporal reward, but oh, great shall be our reward in heaven, where a reward shall be given for a cup of cold water, given in the name of Jesus.

If we would practice that divine virtue of charity to the poor we would not need state asylums, county poor farms and the like. The really deserving poor who have self-respect would rather die of hunger, yes starve, than to go to a public asylum or to go and beg.

Is it their fault that they are poor? It may be a drunken husband, people too lazy to work, but in most cases it is the result of sickness or death taking away the support of the family.

Behold a good Christian mother with several children; her husband is dead, and she, strong in her

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faith, understands too well a mother's duty to her children. They can help very little or nothing; hunger comes, and when her children ask for bread she can give only a kiss and tears. They plead they are starving. She is more hungry than all the rest. Friends, men and women, for God's sake go; do not come to church before you have brought relief to that home. God and I will excuse you on such an occasion.

Did I describe to you an imaginary case? Oh, no, there are many families in such distress, and on many an occasion poor children and poor mothers have to go to bed or spend the day without a morsel to eat, not a stick of wood to keep them warm, nor sufficient clothing to cover their nakedness. Hear them weep. There is the music that should reach not only our ears, but our hearts, and we should bring relief.

In most parishes in which there are poor, and generally there are poor in every parish who are in need, but self-respecting poor (do not call it pride) who are ashamed to beg, who even with the little they have try to dress neatly and clean, and often when a smile lights up the face, hunger is gnawing at the very vitals. There are charitable persons, and

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give liberally to the pastor, not for himself, but for those good deserving poor.

These poor people have no outlet for their need except the heart of the pastor, their father in God. Even then their hearts break when forced to unveil their need. O friends, to relieve them and bury the act of charity in the bosom of God. What great reward, for the hand of the poor is the richest soil in God's church.

How much money is squandered, and with it how many, very many, poor could be relieved?

Do you wish to secure God's blessing? Do you desire to keep poverty from your door? Do you wish to provide for your children and keep them out of asylums when you die? Be charitable to the poor, give abundant alms, just as you wish to be charitable to Jesus and make him offerings, and you will show you are a true Christian by your charity to the poor.

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## Third Sunday After Pentecost

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To-day's letter is from St. Peter: "Be you humbled under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in the time of visitation, casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you."

Truly, this is a selfish world. Everybody looks out for himself. There is in us an anxiety to have plenty, or rather to have more than enough. We must provide for a rainy day; sickness may come; so-called misfortune may befall us, and we must be prepared for it.

Well, this is all right, and we should provide. God wants us to do this, and let us do it like conscientious Christians, not at the cost of the practice of our faith, or with over-anxiety, always excited and nervous, ever afraid lest God might forget us, overlooking His Fatherly care and divine Providence over us.

This has given rise to many a fault and sin—want of confidence in God—almost shaping our lives as if there were no God.



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How well the Apostle exhorts us to be humbled under the mighty hand of God. Let us remember that we depend entirely upon Him, and that all our efforts are useless and vain unless He is with us. In vain we build unless God builds, in vain we watch unless God watches.

Our Lord condemns that want of confidence in His Father when he says: Why are you so solicitous about the things to eat or drink or about clothing? Your Father in heaven knows that you stand in need of these. Will He forget? If you do His holy will and do what you can He will provide.

On what can we rely in this world? Money—how foolish. Many a wealthy person lost all. Cannot banks fail; cannot fire destroy homes; cannot robbers steal; cannot those who borrowed prove false? Do we rely on friends or relatives, and are they not exposed to the same risks? What is human friendship? O let me look and search for one purely human heart which remains true under all circumstances. Cannot every one of you look back to the past and find treachery even in some who you thought were true and genuine? And health, what is it? To-day we have it and enjoy it, to-morrow

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it is attacked by sickness. God alone is reliable because unchangeable.

But God who knows our needs is all powerful, and He who loved us so, as to give us His only begotten Son will certainly and very readily give us the things which we need here in this world for our support.

The great danger for us is that no sooner do we get along well and see plenty at our disposal, we, through forgetfulness, become self-sufficient. We begin to feel safe in this world, and we begin to overlook the fact that every good gift comes from above, and in a great many ways we live without God. We rely upon the things we possess.

Almighty God, if He sees that we are not humbled under His mighty hand, that we forget Him and imagine that we can do without Him, sends us some misfortune, as the Apostle says, to recall us to a sense of our duty; that He may exalt us in the time of visitation; to teach us the great lesson; to cast all our care upon Him, for he hath care of us.

Unless God does this to us when we forget Him, it might be a sign that he has cast us away and lets us live in that blindness, and that we are not any

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longer worthy of his visitation, so He will not exalt us.

God is always more desirous about the good of our soul than of our body, and if we first look to the good of our soul He will help us in everything we need.

Friends, let us come home to ourselves. When God gave us a good home and plenty to eat and drink, did we ever thank Him for His gifts? Are there not families who never say a prayer before and after meals, and never think of giving thanks to God for His blessings? The only thing uppermost in their minds is the good meal and the good things to eat, but they never think of God, who gives it all.

Ingratitude to God is a very common and ugly fault with most people, and it is on account of this fault that God tries us.

We should rely upon God with childlike simplicity, feeling convinced that God will never forget us; that He loves us the Apostle says, "He hath care of us." If we try to serve God rightly, we should feel as secure under the guidance of divine Providence as a child resting in the arms and upon the

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heart of its mother. It feels perfectly safe, and we should do as the Apostle advises—cast all care upon God.

In the time of the Franco-Prussian war most important messages had to be sent to the chief general. A train was started, only one coach and engine; about ten persons were in the coach; the child of the engineer was amongst them; the train rolled and rocked and leaped, ready to leave the track at any moment. All were alarmed and frightened except the little child. When asked why, it smiled when all the grown-up people were scared, it answered: "My papa is on the engine, and he knows that I am here. I feel all right."

Beloved brethren, when shall we learn that lesson? Cast all our care on God, our Father in heaven, who loves us, who is able to protect us, who is leading us to His own home; is at the helm of creation; from all eternity He knows us well; He formed the whole physical creation for us. How safe and secure we should be, humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and perfectly secure, trusting in His fatherly love and care.

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How happy are those who understand this lesson. They do what they can; they pray and work as if success depended on them, and work for God. The result is left to God. If failure comes in this world, God will exalt them in the time of visitation. They shall never be deceived, for they have cast all their care upon Him, and knowing that of self they can do nothing, they give all honor and glory to Him.



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## Fourth Sunday After Pentecost

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I read from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans: "Brethren, I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us.

The Almighty made us for infinite happiness, not for suffering, and therefore it is so natural for us to hate suffering or trials. We abhor suffering, and we do everything in our power to avoid it.

And yet since the fall of our first parents, sufferings have become the necessary and inevitable companion of human nature. God did not will it when He made us. His plan was to let us be happy, never to suffer neither sickness nor hunger nor cold nor death, but to live happy in that beautiful state of innocence, and without death He would have given us heaven.

We, by sin, brought all misfortunes and miseries and sufferings. So we should not murmur or complain or blame no one but ourselves.

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Now Jesus Christ did us the greatest favor to turn the effects of sin, a curse, into a blessing by his passion and death.

The law is inexorable. Only through trials and tribulations can we enter into the Kingdom of heaven. Write it in your minds and hearts, as well as upon the walls of your homes—"no cross, no crown."

Do you want to upset the saying of our dear Lord: The disciple is not above the Master. If you wish to be my disciple take up the cross and follow me.

When the good mother asked Our Lord to place her two sons, one on his left and the other on his right, in His Kingdom, what did He answer? Can they drink the chalice of my passion?

Christ gave us the example. He was sinless, innocent, and yet He suffers most, even the death of the cross.

He made it a necessary condition of salvation to take up our cross and to follow Him.

Look how He treats those who are dearest and nearest to Him, His own blessed Mother. He makes

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her the Queen of Martyrs by letting her suffer most terribly on His account, her whole life full of anxiety about him, and finally seeing Him suffer, die. She, too, was sinless and innocent.

His apostles undergo martyrdom. They are persecuted. In fact He tells them that they will be hated by the world.

How could we ever merit heaven and its everlasting rewards if we never have any suffering, cross or trial? Do you want to enjoy health and plenty means to live, no sickness, nice weather, no death, not even any contradictions or wrong sayings or doings by neighbors or so-called friends. Well, after a long, prosperous, cloudless life you want to die a very easy death, and of course no purgatory. Oh, indeed not; the Lord should be waiting for you, and send an army of angels to meet you and bring you triumphantly into heaven. Why? It was through suffering and death that Jesus, your model, entered into His Kingdom, and you want better treatment than Our Lord. The road to Calvary is the only road to the Resurrection.

Christ gave the example, all the saints followed Him, and therefore it is the only road to heaven.

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Without suffering or trials we cannot merit, and since trials and sufferings are the necessary companions of human nature, let us make a virtue of necessity and turn those necessary evils of poor, fallen human nature into a source of blessing or heavenly reward.

It has been well said, "What cannot be cured must be endured." Let us not only be resigned, but brave, and make life not only bearable but heroic and meritorious by uniting the sufferings or trials of our state of life to the sufferings of our Lord.

When God sends us trials it is a sign of His love. He gives us the means of meriting, the means of atoning for the past, and like an experienced miner, who throws the good ore into the furnace in order to separate the dross from the gold, so God purifies in us, through suffering our self-love, and teaches us to love the cross in order to imitate Him.

God is the best physician of our soul, and therefore He gives to every one that particular cross or trial which is best for each of us, that particular medicine which if taken with humble submission to the will of God, will without fail cure us, and make us perfect in His sight.



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It would indeed be no cross or suffering if it did not hurt. We are all willing to take a cross, yes, one of His flowers or nice ornaments, but the cross of Christ with its thorns and scourges and ignominy, oh, that hurts. We murmur, we cry and feel despondent, and wonder why God should afflict us so.

We almost doubt God's justice. Why, there are many who never go near the church who lead a bad life, and they get along and seem to live happy. O ye of little faith, God is rewarding these people with the temporal things of this world, as He cannot give them heaven, and because He wants to crown you in heaven, and try you here in this world. Are you jealous of them? Do you begrudge them the paltry things of this world? Do you think that you are an exception to the law of God? Stop a moment, reflect upon the words the Apostle wrote: I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come.

Look at the cross in the light of Christ, look at it in the light of the Resurrection, and you will learn not to murmur but to love trials and crosses, as means to make you similar to Jesus Christ, your model, and to secure greater reward in heaven.



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The greatest saints who understood this, prayed to God to suffer or to die, for grace to suffer more, and like the apostles, they rejoiced when they could suffer something for the sake of their Master.

Put aside all murmuring. Thank God He gave you a cross, embrace it, raise it to your shoulder, and bravely walk in the footsteps of the great Master to Calvary and thus to heaven.

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## Fifth Sunday After Pentecost

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The whole letter of St. Peter, which we read to-day, is so full of useful and practical instructions that I have only to call your attention to it, and we will learn how to live in peace and happiness with our fellowmen.

The Apostle tells us to be of one mind. Now, dear friends, how can that possibly be when there are thousands of different opinions and notions that sway the mind of most people. Why, we may well say that there are not two persons who think alike.

Yet the Apostle tells us be of one mind. Do you not see that our minds should clearly understand the beautiful and easy law of God in regard to our fellowmen, that whatsoever is done to the least of them he considers as done to himself. Now, if we would be thoroughly convinced of this, we would all be of one mind, and we would all try to imitate our model, Jesus Christ.

We must have compassion, one of another. How

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our hearts should go forth, first to those of our own household, and then to all friends and neighbors, being, as the Apostle says, lovers of the Brotherhood. Yes, love one another as children of God and brothers of Jesus Christ.

Then we will be merciful. How readily will we excuse one another, find reasons for overlooking the faults of our neighbor, never judging the motives of others, because, as the Apostle says, we will be modest and humble; we will see our own unworthiness and nothingness, and convinced that we are not as perfect as we should be, that we too have sinned in the past; we shall remain humble and modest, and not dare to find fault with others or condemn them.

Far will it be from us to render evil for evil, or look for revenge when God had patience with us, and forgave our sins; and bears up with those who are offending Him.

We will not answer unkind or harsh words, or as St. Peter says, railing for railing, but how forgiving and noble. We will answer with a blessing. Yes, the true answer of a genuine Christian is: I leave it all to God. May God bless them.

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St. Peter tells us that we are called unto this, that we may inherit a blessing. Where is that blessing, the peace and happiness which we would all inherit, if we would be of one mind and love the Brotherhood? The blessing that God would give us, as St. Peter says, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the just and his ears unto their prayers."

Here upon earth there can be no greater comfort and joy and happiness than to live in a home in which all are of one mind, so united in brotherly love, no unkind words are ever spoken but words of compassion, of love. The children, brothers and sisters love one another dearly, and they all together love their father and mother. Truly it is the home of God, and God blesses them and hears their prayers.

Now we should act towards one another and to speak to one another as brothers and sisters who love one another very dearly, in their Father, God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

How often have we heard it said, leave yourself become broad-minded and noble hearted to mankind. Well, there is true philanthropy, about which the world boasts so much, and yet which it does not practice—true love of our fellowmen.

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There will be no distinction of race or color or exterior beauty or wealth. Wherever there is a human being, to that human being we extend mercy, compassion and love.

That is precisely what God does in every human being. He sees His image—for every human being Jesus Christ died, every human being can obtain life everlasting.

Now we should try to divest ourselves of, to shake off, that narrowmindedness which belittles our minds and narrows our hearts.

A good word for all, a smile, a good act, so that we will destroy heartaches and anxiety and dispel gloom and sorrow and create a cheerful spirit amongst our friends and neighbors.

A genuine, cheerful Christian spreads joy and happiness. They live to make others happy. Here is God's life; all He does is to make us happy.

That cheerful disposition cultivated in our souls through a correct understanding of the example of our Lord lights up every home of gloom, of poverty, of sickness, even the room of death in which the corpse of a loved one is lying.



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It makes us all to all, as Jesus was. We weep with the sorrowing, we sympathize with the afflicted, we console, we uplift the sad and the despondent, and how by our kindness we enter into their hearts, and bring them unto hope, thus lifting them to God. We thus become other Christs, and make even the poor and the abandoned of one mind and one heart.

When a Christian goes forth out of self and brings hope to the heart of the afflicted, he is really a philanthropist, he is truly a cirriziler in the correct sense of the word, humanitarian, because Christ assumed our nature and brought it blessings.

Look upon so merciful, so gentle, so sympathetic a life, so full of Christian devotion and love, all in imitation of Christ, all under the eye of our common Father, God, for the good of the Brotherhood, as St. Peter says, and we may well add, there is genuine Christianity, which lights up and lifts the world, which regenerates the world and brings it to God by the practice of the noblest virtue—Charity.

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## Sixth Sunday After Pentecost

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Letter from St. Paul to the Romans: "You are alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The problem of life is the great study of to-day. How did it begin, how is it increased and perfected, how can it be made new and vigorous to withstand the attacks of sickness, to keep death away as long as possible, to enjoy the best health.

These are all questions about which we are very much concerned, and in case our health is not what it should be, we are alarmed and look for remedies and the advice of experienced physicians.

All this is very praiseworthy, and we should do all we can to be healthy, so as to make life agreeable, not so much for ourselves as for others, because experience shows that when our health is not what it should be we become fretful and feverish and cranky.

Remember we are talking about human life, the life of a rational being, the compound of a spiritual

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being, the soul, and of a material part called the body, the two being very harmoniously united in one, called man.

The soul acts most powerfully upon the body. The soul is the principle of human life in its three-fold action, as a spirit, as the supporting principle of the body, as the acting and governing principle of human life, that is of man.

When the intellect of man guides and the will causes man to follow that guidance, we call that act a human act. As long as the soul is in the body, united to it into the being man, there is life, human life. Now, there is our existence in this world, the term or period of our life, a series of consecutive actions performed by man until death comes to call us.

If we merely allow our feelings to lead us through life, our life is that of the senses, it is merely an animal life. If we take our intellect and will and follow them we lead a human or a rational life; but if we have our minds enlightened by faith and our wills strengthened by the help that God gives us through Christ, and follow their guidance, we have human life supernaturalized, and in our earthly life,

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thus elevated to God through Christ, we lead a divine life, the life of which St. Paul speaks when he says: "You are alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

That new life is a pure gift of God, which in His mercy He is willing to infuse into our very nature if we will make good use of it, and make it grow unto perfection by using the means which he has placed at our disposal.

That new life is necessary for salvation, as our Lord clearly said: "Unless a man be reborn of water and of the Holy Ghost he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." A new, not material, but spiritual birth, from and through the spouse of Jesus Christ, the fruitful mother of the children of God.

It is entirely a new life, not for the soul alone, but likewise for the body, for man, affecting his natural life so intimately that it will raise man—that is, both soul and body, unto divinity.

Now, unless we have this new life, that life which Christ brought to us by His sufferings and death, we may possess physical health and wealth and enjoy the pleasures of this world and become very prominent, well known and popular, but we never rise



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above flesh and blood, and our life, eaten by every breath we draw, is carried away by time. Our life is simply a chain of daily actions, each of which takes so much of life, wearing away our strength and vitality to end in the grave.

The new life, which rises above the senses and places us in a new world, makes us live beyond the grave, and opens new and loftier truths to the mind, and places before our craving hearts a new world of infinite happiness, is the only life worth living.

What a great misfortune it is to see thousands of well meaning people, naturally smart and clever, even brilliant minds with hearts longing for something higher than the mere satisfaction of the senses, complete strangers to that supernatural life. Many of them have not the slightest idea of that divine life.

Now, dear friends, Christ has given us that life. As the Apostle expresses it: "You are alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Do you appreciate this divine gift, and do you feed and support that divine life in you?



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Look at the babe of a poor mother, then at the one of the rich. Excepting the dress there is no difference in the outward looks and appearance, but what a difference as regards the circumstances which surround the two. One has at its disposal all the wealth and fortune of its wealthy parents. It is born heir to large fortunes. Its prospects in life are gratifying, its future provided for, wealth is awaiting, ready to satisfy its every wish in a fine home or palace. It is of noble blood; see the babe of the poor, and though it may look healthier than its richer rival, what is there in store for it? Its future so uncertain, poverty at the door of the hut, parents not able to provide for it.

Well, friends, here are two babes, very nice, and as the world calls them, sweet. One has been baptized, the other not, perhaps through ignorance, or, God forbid, through slothful neglect. The christened babe has received the new life in God through Christ our Lord. It has at its disposal the full inheritance of Christ even in this world, all His merits, all the graces which He has left us, and there is beyond this life the eternal life in heaven.

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That divine life thus infused into the child must be kept intact and alive by the care of father and mother. They are responsible for that soul.

As in the natural order, we may become very careless, even reckless about the health of our bodies, and thus bring about sickness and death, so in the supernatural, by being careless and slothful we can bring about sickness and death for the soul by losing the life in God which Christ has given us.

Look at the means, so strong and powerful, which our Lord has left at our disposal, not only to keep that supernatural life, but to strengthen it and increase it, making it so full of true manliness and vigor that it is proof against all the attacks of sin and Satan and hell combined.

Friends, rather give up the life of the body than that of the soul; so did the martyrs; so said Christian mothers to their children, "Rather see you die than to see you lose the grace of God, which is the life in God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

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## Seventh Sunday After Pentecost

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Letter of St. Paul to the Romans: "For the end of them is death, for the wages of sin is death."

If we will look at all the miseries and misfortunes and evils and trials and crosses which affect poor human nature in this miserable world, in the light of the sufferings and death of our Lord, as we did before, we shall find that all these, through Christ, have become a source of merit, of heavenly reward.

We shall necessarily come to the conclusion that in reality there is but one evil in this world—it is that evil which takes us away from God, who alone can make us happy, and which fills our souls with remorse and sadness, and brings us nothing but unhappiness here in this world and in the next. That evil is sin. Well does St. Paul say: "The wages of sin is death." Yes, death for the soul and suffering and death for the body, wreck and ruin for man.

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Do you know the history of sin? Look at creation! It is a beautiful chain, beginning with simple links, each successive one growing more developed—seemingly stronger, all in gradation until from a simple atom, a particle so small that the senses cannot reach it even with our keenest instruments. We come to man, the highest being in this world, having in his nature all the powers of the material world. In our nature we combine the spiritual and the material, the link between matter and spirit. Between us and God there is another link, the order of pure spirits, that is, spirits who have no bodies, not encumbered by flesh and blood.

Now the law of God knows no exception. He will never bestow infinite happiness on any creature which has the free use of intellect and will unless that free being recognizes, not only in theory or in speculation, but in practice, the supremacy of God—that is, that He is absolute master over all things as Creator, that is, he is God.

The greatest minds in the Church, her eminent theologians, teach us that God created the order of pure spirits before He made man. These spirits, so bright and strong, had to follow the same law that we have; they had to acknowledge and in prac-



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tice recognize that God was their creator; that they depended entirely upon Him, and that without Him they could do nothing. Well leaning upon their self-sufficiency, being conscious of their deep, penetrating intellect and strong will power, they thought they could do for themselves, they needed not the Almighty, and would not recognize Him as their Creator, Lord and Master; and God smote them in their pride, and Lucifer and his followers fell from grace and were punished by the Almighty. The wages of their sin was eternal death; that is, separation from God forever.

God made our first parents the most beautiful man and grandest woman that ever walked the earth, except Jesus and His mother. Their minds and hearts were clean and pure. They spoke with God. They were never to toil, the earth would give its fruits of every description, untouched, untilled, no excessive heat or cold, no sickness, no death, constant happiness—the earth a real paradise. Blessed children of a most kind and loving Father, God.

Sin came, through the temptation of the evil one. He fell, he was jealous of man and his future. He could not reach God to get revenge, so



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he would wreck God's image. Eat of the forbidden fruit; have you no mind of your own and will of your own? They fell, and by that sin they drew down upon themselves and us every misfortune that has befallen poor human nature from the moment they rebelled against God until now. So blame not God, but blame sin, for every affliction that has befallen you and will come, until death, the wages of sin, shall give the last fatal blow.

The effects of sin are terrible. As the Apostle says, "The wages of sin is death." What is death? Death in man, is the separation of the soul from the body, making it lifeless; unfit to be kept amongst the living, incapable of any action whatsoever; the principle of life, the soul, has been taken away; chemical action swiftly destroys the dead organism.

What is sin? The death of the soul as regards the supernatural life. God has withdrawn from that soul, and in God and for God that soul is more deeply in spiritual death than the corpse in natural death. That soul has lost all power to do the very smallest meritorious act; by the withdrawal of God from that soul it is spiritually lifeless, dead, and the effect of this state is, to be rejected by Almighty God, more so than we reject the corpse. And holy men dared say that it requires

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more of God's power to restore a sinner to the divine life than it would require to restore the corpse to life.

Sin darkens the mind, for the grace of God consists in light for the mind and strength for the will. When God withdraws from the soul, that light is gone. Only the remembrance remains, and so is the strength which was given to the will. We feel that now we are weak.

Mortal sin is the death of the soul, but there is sickness for the soul as well as for the body. I refer to venial sin, that is, sins which do not drive God out of our hearts, but offend and displease Him, gradually diminishing the life of the soul, making it more and more weak, and finally it falls from grace and mortal sin enters, the fatal blow to the life of our souls.

In the words of the Apostle, let us not serve uncleanness and iniquity, but yield our members to serve justice unto sanctification, for the end of them is death. But being made free from sin and having become servants of God, you have your fruit unto sanctification and the end life everlasting. Let the grace of God therefore unto life everlasting dwell in you in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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## Eighth Sunday After Pentecost.

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We read from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans: "Whosoever are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Dear friends, shall we to-day look into our lives, and see whether we are the sons of God our Father—that is, are we led by the spirit of God?

There is in every home a family spirit; it is impressed upon the child by the sayings and doings of father and mother, and it takes so strong a hold of us in childhood that as we grow into manhood we, by imitating our parents, acquire habits of talking and of acting which we often keep through life.

Should these habits be good, it is certainly a blessing, but, good or evil, they have taken deep root in our natures, and it is so natural for us to act and speak from early training, that we talk and act as our father and mother did, so that we often say, well, he or she got that from their father

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or their mother; that boy takes after his father; that girl takes after her mother.

It is often a surprise for people when the children are not like their parents; we cannot help noticing it; we remark it; well, how different they are from their father and mother, you would never think, from seeing them or hearing them talk that they are the children of such parents.

There cannot possibly be any other reason for this except that the children have never grown into the family spirit and through company, good or bad, are strangers to that spirit.

In many cases, where the parents lead bad lives, it is certainly a blessing for the children not to follow their parents, but to be influenced by good company. If, on the contrary, the father, and especially the mother, for she has more care of the child than her husband, are good and exemplary Christians, how good and Christian is the family spirit of that home, how deeply do the words and the example of the parents take root in the heart of the children, never to be forgotten. How often do we hear good children say: "My mother forbids



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it," "My mother tells me to do it," "I was not taught that way."

Now, dear friends, the Church is the home of Jesus Christ, and amongst the good members there exists a family spirit which is the spirit of Jesus Christ. It is impressed upon the mind and heart of the true Christian by the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost. I may correctly call it "Catholic sense" or seemingly instinct, acquired by practicing our religion well, understanding correctly its doctrine and practices as well of obligation as of piety.

It manifests itself in keeping the mind from error. We not only know what the Church teaches, but by the gift of understanding and of piety, our minds judge so correctly, not only defined doctrine, but also about the practices that flow from them. By these gifts we look upon God as a dearly loving Father, and the great idea of our lives is to please Him and never to offend. We do resemble Him in Jesus Christ, and thus we are the sons of God.

This beautiful home spirit is not so much derived from long and deep study, though these may make the Catholic spirit more intense, but this Catholic



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instinct grows in us and becomes perfect by co-operating with the grace of God.

Take a Catholic child well instructed in its catechism, leading a pure life. Let it drink in well what the Church teaches and what she practices, and you won't have to tell that child to go to confession. Let it make its first communion, and it will long to go again. By the use of prayer, by going to services, by the use of the sacraments, its soul is led by the Holy Spirit, and it will give better answers on the so-called mysteries of our faith than the greatest theologian.

Through that Catholic instinct it will naturally feel if there is any question of doctrine, which seems doubtful, it may not be able to give the reason, but as that doubtful doctrine is not congenial to its Catholic mind it will tell you that, it does not know exactly why it is, but feels that such doctrine is not right, even though some great priest or bishop might advance it.

Convinced absolutely that the Church is infallible, no matter what the world and error and hell combined may attempt, or preach or do, the child is safe, it will cling to the Church, independently

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of all that may happen of heresy or schism. It is the child of God.

Instinctively it feels that as St. Paul says, there is a time to rejoice and a time to weep; during the seasons of Advent and Lent, it acts with the impression that when the Church does penance, it should abstain from all, even lawful, amusements.

It is responsive to the feelings of Mother Church. Whenever there are services it will look upon them as an invitation to come close to our Lord.

Novelties, strange and unheard of things, such as extraordinary or new devotions, make no impression upon it. Curiosity does not lead it, for our Lord has said: When they tell you, Christ is here or there, do not believe it. That child by its keen perception of true devotion and worship will be slow to go to novelties, until it has received the sanction of a prudent and wise director and felt in its heart that what seems new is only the appearance and that it is in conformity with the guidance of the Church.

As for communion, why it would simply be shocked if it would be satisfied with going only once a year. Its Catholic instinct and feeling bring it

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at the foot of the altar whenever the church bell calls. It has the greatest respect for the anointed of God and whatever is sacred. It respects and honors the saints with the greatest admiration, but its whole nature, so full of that Catholic instinct, goes naturally to Jesus Christ and his blessed mother. These two are the object of its devotion first and foremost.

My dear friends, would to God that all of you without exception were filled with that beautiful spirit. How safe you would be in your faith, how humble, how docile. The words of Christ would be verified in you: "Unless you become like little children you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." Yes, you will be the children, the sons of God in Jesus Christ.

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## Ninth Sunday After Pentecost

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“Wherefore he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed, lest he fall.” I take these words from the beautiful letter which St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, which letter I have just read to you.

One of the most astonishing facts, which is, indeed, undeniable, is the great weakness of the human will. And how could it be otherwise? Born in original sin, with the sad effects of that fall in us, passionate by nature, the flesh rebelling against the spirit, surrounded by so many snares and temptations, poor human nature, were it not for the superabundance of God’s means which he places at our disposal (and which are a direct proof that we are weak), we certainly would fall and be lost forever.

When you look back upon your past life, are you not astonished how you fell, and how frequently you gave way to sin, and how grievously you offended God? When you go to confession and try

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to make your act of contrition, do you feel ashamed of yourself and tell Almighty God that you never intended to go that far, that really you do not see why and how you commit sins so grievous and manifold.

Why did all this happen? Dear friends, the Apostle tells us the cause in his letter which we read to-day—take heed lest you fall. We do not take heed; we become careless, and gradually and surely we fall by degrees lower and lower until we end in mortal sin.

No Christian is safe unless he keeps his mind always in the disposition that under no circumstances and for no *one*, whether upon earth or in heaven, he will ever wilfully do, say or even think anything which is wrong, no matter how slight it may be. With the true Christian it is not a question of slight or grievous—the uprightness of his disposition is, never to displease or offend God in any way.

So noble a disposition keeps the heart turned to God and the will becomes gradually confirmed by force of habit and naturally rests with God. Peace on earth to men of good will.



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When the will is upright sin becomes, morally speaking, impossible, for as the consent of the will is required for sin, and the habit of the will is to will good, and that only, such disposition is the most secure, counteracting and overcoming the great weakness of our poor natures.

Our arch enemy, Satan, goes around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He is always busy about us, how to ruin us and lead us astray by gradually robbing us of the grace of God. He cares not how long it takes him, provided he succeeds in his evil design.

The devil, after carefully studying us and our weakness and our special inclination to evil, so-called our predominant passion, plans our ruin, yes, the ruin of every one, Pope, cardinal, bishop, priest and layman, and dear friends, unless we take heed as the Apostle warns us, he will accomplish our ruin.

How cunningly and ingeniously he goes about that evil plan. He, with his experience of thousands of years, having filled hell with immortal souls, persons who had the same dispositions and inclinations as we have, knows well that no one ever

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becomes bad and wicked all at once, and therefore he tempts slowly and gradually, increasing his allurements and deceptions every time, gradually taking away from us the grace of God and causing us to fall into grievous sin, and then by discouragement and almost despair, keeps us away from God, perhaps for a long time, for years, and it may be for all eternity.

Is this not the way in which you fell into sin? Oh, how slight the beginning. The devil suggested: Well, you need not be scrupulous or so particular; why, you are not a saint; you need not be running to church day and night; what is the use of frequent confession and communion? Does not the Church teach that once a year is sufficient. Well, I cannot be watching all the time. I can't always find time to pray. Well, I know I am not a saint, but still I do not murder or steal. I try to be good, and all such nice sounding excuses, covered snares by which the devil destroys the exactness of a good and correct conscience, robs us each and every time of the strong grace of God by diminishing it in our souls, by making us careless, by leading us into mortal sin, and thus to wreck and ruin.

No one ever lost the faith but it began with a

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little. Oh, we imagined we were Catholics, strong in our own faith, and we heard a lecture by an infidel, we read a book which was not very good, out of condescension, for we did not wish to appear narrowminded. We went to other churches; why? on account of friendship. We had to see and hear a great many things we did not like about faith and religion. And all this weakened and finally deadened our faith.

Did you become a drunkard? Did it not begin with one glass. You felt a craving for drink growing within you; you must have some satisfaction. It brought you a nice feeling. It took away gloom and oppression, and the appetite, uncontrolled, led you to be under the influence of drink and finally brought on drunkenness.

Did you lose virtue? Are you a wreck of self-indulgence in ugly habits, or have you plunged into sins and vices that have brought shame and disgrace not only on yourself but on others? If so, did it not begin by books and reading and conduct that were not pure? Passion was stirred; your blood boiled within you, and you fell.

And what I have said of these sins I say of every

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sin. Anger, spite lead to hatred and murder; uncontrolled desire for wealth leads to theft and injustice and hardness of heart. Our predominant passion is the handle the devil uses against us to bring about our ruin.

How clear, then, it should be to us to be on our guard; for many and powerful and experienced are our enemies, the devil, the world and our passions—how strongly must I repeat to you the words of the Apostle: “Wherefore he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed, lest he fall.”

Do we live up to this advice, or do we live from day to day carried away by the strong current of thoughtlessness, of want of a thorough examination of our consciences, and not taking heed but falling frequently into faults and sin, and bring about evil habits which will ensnare us and ruin us for life and eternity?

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## Tenth Sunday After Pentecost

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To-day's reading is from the letter which St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians. He says: There are diversities of operations, but the same God who worketh in all.

The great secret by which we can make the best of life and be happy in the state of life in which we are, is to realize what St. Paul says, that there are diverse gifts, diverse operations, but the same God who worketh in all.

We find in the world restless people who never accomplish anything, and yet go from one thing to another, never satisfied, imagining that they can better their condition by changing from one profession or trade or occupation to another, and never trying to perfect themselves in one thing. The old saying is very true: "A rolling stone gathers no moss."

This holds true, and very true, in our lives. See-



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ing other people and imagining they are in better circumstances or seem to be happy or in a higher position than we are, we begin to grumble and we aspire to be as they are, whether we are fit for their position or not.

The providence of God has it so arranged that in this world we depend on one another and therefore there must be people in all the different stations of life, from the highest to the lowest, for without this society could not stand. Circumstances of birth and early training, special talents and natural gifts, fine opportunities and above all prudence in selecting for ourselves that state or occupation for which our talents and education, guided by our faith, fit us best, should determine what state of life or occupation we should embrace.

It is certain that God, who never can do anything useless, wants us to do our part in this vast world in some way or other, and become a stone, large or small, conspicuous or hidden, yet useful, if not absolutely necessary in the great moral building of the universe. We do not belong to ourselves absolutely but relatively, and therefore must do our duty in that state of life in which we have been placed.

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If we are in a state of life which we cannot change, we should try to perfect ourselves in that state, even if we have made a mistake in embracing it, for God will always give us sufficient grace to lead a good life and to secure our salvation.

It is for these reasons that we should be careful in the choice of a state of life and even in the choice of occupation or trade or profession. And this especially is the duty of parents and the spiritual father, the pastor, prudently to guide and advise their children so as to secure for them those pursuits and station of life which is best suited to them.

God, in giving us gifts and talents, either through nature or culture, for every good gift comes from above, generally shows us for what we are best suited, and if we will study the natural disposition and the talents of the mind and the natural but correct wishes or inclinations of the heart, with prayer, it will be comparatively easy to determine what course we should pursue in life.

We should not allow passion and worldliness to influence us. How many persons only look to this world in choosing a position or occupation in life.

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Money is the ruling idea. How much is there in it? Salary predominates, whether the man or woman is fit for the position or not, whether there might be danger for faith or morals, whether they will be able to attend to the Church or not—the main idea is, how much is there in it? And this especially holds true with parents and their children in the choice of a partner for life. I mean marriage. Is he rich? Has he a fine position? Is he a prominent man? Perhaps he has even titles; claims to nobility. But whether he is a good, practical Catholic, devout, his morality above reproach—that goes for nothing.

Parents are bound to see what their children are best suited for and develop the natural talents or gifts which God has bestowed upon them, so as to prepare them to enter upon life in a practical, but above all, in a Christian manner.

And children should pray to God to enlighten them so as to know God's will and advise with their parents and with their pastors, whom the Church of God has placed over them, in the choice of a state of life. Be not afraid to open your hearts to your best and truest friends in this world—your temporal and spiritual superiors.

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The principal reason which should determine us in the choice of a state of life, and even in business pursuits, should be to serve God more devotedly, to further or at least to secure our spiritual welfare, and above all our eternal salvation.

And friends, I must make special reference to the religious and to the state of Priesthood. Certainly in this world there is nothing so exalted as the priesthood or the holy call to the religious life.

And if we have a genuine call or vocation to it, thank God, and you will surely be happy and fill the sublime calling of Christ. Here especially lies my duty towards you, towards the country and towards the Church of God. If you find in your children the requisite talents and the true spirit for that exalted state, under no circumstances force a vocation. Do not tell your son that you want him to be a priest. Never urge, but pray to God, and encourage that beloved boy by telling him that if God calls, if God in his mercy and love should call him to the altar, you will be very happy and thank God for it. Never let motives of vanity or pride or consideration of money place your son at the altar, for if the Church has to weep bitterly over the fall of her children, it is over fallen priests

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who had no vocation and who for worldly motives, or the forcing of their parents, were ordained priests.

Brethren, let us strive to know the will of God. Let us act calmly and fill our judgments with prayer, and embrace that state of life which we conscientiously believe to be in accordance with the holy will of God, and then make every effort to perfect ourselves in it, to make life real and beneficial, for the honor and glory of God and the welfare of our neighbor.



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## Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost

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St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: "But by the grace of God I am what I am."

How instructive are these words of the great Apostle. How true, how humble and glorifying God, and very applicable to ourselves.

You know that St. Paul was a very brilliant man. God had gifted him with a very strong character. He was a born orator, and by study and education he had become a leader amongst the people, so that they respected him and feared him. Believing that Christians were bad and were enemies dangerous to the state, he got power from the governor to arrest them and punish them by exile and torture.

Receiving the grace of conversion through Christ speaking to him in a vision, he immediately did penance, received instructions from the Apostles, and became the chosen one of God, a vessel of election, to go, not to persecute, but to preach the

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Gospel of Jesus to the gentiles. How St. Paul appreciated that sublime grace of God, by which from a sinner he became an Apostle! How well does he acknowledge all this when he says, "Our sufficiency is from God. By the grace of God I am what I am." He means, an Apostle.

By the words which I have just quoted, St. Paul recognizes the fact that he has, both in the natural and supernatural order, gifts of God, and by corresponding with the grace of God he is what he is, a man full of talent and power, enriched by the grace of God, working and toiling for his master with all the ardor of his strong nature.

All his great sermons and wonderful works, even the sufferings which he underwent for Christ, never made him vain, oh, never. All he gloried in, all he preached was Christ and Him crucified.

God has given to every one of us natural gifts, and through the kindness of our Lord, the Redeemer, has given us supernatural gifts. All these blessings and gifts we should appreciate, and never be vain or self conceited. Let us learn, as the Apostle says of himself, that what we are—that is, if we are anything—we are by the grace of God.

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As far as our physical existence in this vast material world is concerned, we are very insignificant. We are the outgrowth of the laws of generation, a drop compared to the vast ocean of human beings, so helpless. To continue in life we need the constant care and attention of our parents. We are the most helpless of the animal kingdom.

If we have any natural gifts or talents, are they not the traits which we inherit from our parents? If we receive education and training, do we not owe this to others? And if, after we are no longer taught by others, we culture ourselves, as we should do, is it not by the permission and help of God, who gives us the power to do this?

How few people are there who recognize the fact that even in the natural order everything so called good in us is from God?

But above all, no matter how brilliant and talented we may be by gifts or culture, if we are left to ourselves, we will abuse these natural gifts, and by that abuse bring ruin on ourselves.

Take the most enlightened and learned men of the past and of our day, and what were they, what are they to-day? Fine specimens of the animal

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kingdom, made very smart by their quick minds and strong wills, but all for this world, to gain renown, to gather money, to enjoy pleasure, and thus to squander all these gifts of nature developed by the study and culture of mere materialism.

Man in his fallen nature cannot look beyond matter, and the learned are no exception to this rule. Renowned astronomers remaining within the realms of the sky, do not see the cause of the heavenly mechanism, the learned who try to explain life confined to cells and embryo, are ignorant of the immortal soul that indwells the physical. And so it is with all those who confine their researches to mere matter, and, alas, cannot look beyond, because they have no knowledge of the supernatural, either because God's grace has not entered their souls, or because they rejected it through passion or pride.

All these beautiful gifts of nature are dangerous if we have not the grace of God which makes us see clearly that God has given us these things, that we must use them for our eternal and temporal welfare.

Is it not far better for a young man to remain



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poor and to labor for his support than to inherit a large fortune which he squanders to his own downfall.

How kind is God in distributing his gifts. Never let us envy any one, and wonder why God did not give us the talents and qualities of others who are above us, riches and wealth as those around us. How we deceive ourselves when we imagine that if we were talented and gifted and had riches we would be so good and do so much good. We do not know ourselves. How many said so, and thought so, and no sooner did they acquire wealth or position, alas, they neglected God, they looked down upon the poor, they abused the gifts of God. There are very few who can look down from a tower or high building without growing dizzy.

When gifted we are very apt to grow proud. God will not give us His grace for He resisteth the proud. If God has been very liberal to us in his natural gifts, the more we need his grace, and if we secure these natural gifts and crown them by corresponding to God's grace, then we are safe. Then nature and grace are harmonized within us, and then we can and must say, "By the grace of God I am what I am."



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## Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost.

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St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians says: "Such confidence we have through Christ towards God."

If we only consider the infinite majesty of God, His divine attributes, His holiness, His power, we would be so overawed that we would not dare go near Him, and we would naturally think that He is so far above us, that he does not care for us.

Yet how great is this misunderstanding about God, how disastrous this would be to us. We can do nothing without God. Although He created us, He cannot leave us to ourselves. He must keep us. We never can be without Him for we would cease to exist.

But when we know this and then when we remember that God gave us His only begotten Son, Jesus, to come here on earth and live with us, becoming one of us, and Jesus reassuring us, telling us of his Father and uniting us to the divine nature,

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then we feel we are near to God, assumed to God through Christ, and have our confidence in God.

God, through Christ, our oldest brother, in our adoption to God, is our loving Father. He wants us near to Him here upon earth and with Him forever in heaven. We should act towards God as children who know their father well, and have all the confidence in Him through Christ.

Dear friends, is it not a source of deep and great consolation to us to know that we have a Father so dear and so loving, to whom we can go, reassured by His own divine Son that what we ask we shall receive through Jesus Christ?

Dear friends, it is through and by prayer, by speaking to God from the heart through the assurance of Christ, that we are all powerful with God. Oh, do chisel into your souls the words of the Apostle—Such confidence we have through Christ towards God.

Do we ever pray? Do not be astonished or surprised when I ask you that question. I know you utter forms of prayers; words, which, if understood, and spoken from the heart and realized by the mind, may be prayers, but do we not justly incur

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the reproach of our Lord: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."

Prayer is the key of heaven; prayer is the key to the heart of God which unlocks for us all the treasures of God's wealth. Pray well and you will live well. Commune with God and you will obtain what you desire, and your prayer will bring you nearer and nearer unto God.

How few people understand prayer. They betray their ignorance when they tell us that they cannot pray, that they get distracted whenever they try to pray, that they never get anything they prayed for.

Prayer is quite natural to us—as natural as it is for a poor or needy person to go and ask a very rich neighbor, a friend, for help and assistance. God is all powerful. He has shown that he is our real friend, and we need everything. What could there be more natural for us than to apply to God, our loving Father, in all our necessities.

But friends, remember we must speak to Him with faith. Oh, that sublime, lively, strong faith. Where is God when you pray? A million miles away, beyond the starry dome of the heavens, seated somewhere upon a lofty throne surrounded by mil-

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lions of angels and saints? What does he care for us? When will our prayers reach Him? What is the use? Oh, ye of little faith! Have you forgotten that in Him we live, we move, we have our being? You need not raise your eyes to the ceiling, nor even to a picture of Christ as babe, as teacher, or hanging on the cross. God is right with you. You are more in Him than a sponge submerged in the ocean. Do you realize that divine presence? If so, would you be distracted? Can you not talk to a relative or neighbor, and weep and pour out the affliction or oppression of your bruised heart, and you never got distracted? Well, I see the person right before me, and were you to see God by lively faith right before you, you would not be distracted, but pour out the distress and sorrow of your broken heart to your Heavenly Father who is right with you.

And here I must repeat the words of the Apostle, Oh, such confidence we have towards God. A child that has confidence in its father goes to him and asks, and knowing that the father loves it, is sure that father will grant its request. Dear friends, how do we go to God when we speak to Him in prayer? Besides that strong, lively faith have we confidence



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in God, sure, positively sure, that God will grant what we ask, provided we have confidence in Him? Is it not true, perhaps, that we have more confidence in the promises of some friend or neighbor than in the promise of our Lord? Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name shall be given unto you. Do we really pray with perfect assurance that on account of the promise of our Lord the Father will give us what we ask.

Be careful to understand that promise of our Lord as he gave it. Whatsoever you will ask the Father in my name. Yes, in the name of Jesus, the Son of the Father, whose will is the will of the Father, and therefore when we ask in the name of Jesus, it means the will of God to decide whether the Father will grant the request as prayed for, or hear the prayer, which He always does and cannot refuse, and grant something even better than the favor you asked for.

We do not know what is best for us, and God, therefore, seeing that what we ask for is not good for us, He hears, and grants us what is best for us. Small children, not knowing what is good for them, often ask for things which strike the senses—a glittering, sharp knife, perhaps even poison, which



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may look attractive. Does the loving mother grant the request of the child? It would be cruelty. Oh, leave to God the result of your prayer, full of faith and perfect confidence, and you will never pray but the promise of our Lord shall be fulfilled. Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.

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## Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost

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The Apostle in to-day's letter tells the Galatians that Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

Our Mother, the Church, teaches us that God made man according to His own image and likeness, and that in our first parents that likeness and resemblance to God was so striking that it made their soul so clear in intellect and their will so inclined to good that God could not help love them, for they were spotless and beautiful as God made them.

I will not attempt to describe that beauty both of soul and body which God gave them as to His dear children, but by their actual sin, their open disobedience to God, they and we, their children, lost all those beautiful gifts of God and therefore it becomes almost impossible to explain how God, who created man for perfect happiness in this world and in the next, had endowed them with natural and

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supernatural gifts, even with immortality. We can think about this and let our imagination wonder, but we cannot do justice to it.

Upon them, however, fell the punishment. All the free gifts of God, their immortality, the perfect subordination of the body to the soul and the natural control over the senses, were taken away. Even the earth was cursed and on account of their willful act of disobedience they were condemned to labor, above all losing all right of inheritance to the eternal rewards of heaven which God would have given to them and to us as a reward for their fidelity. All hope was gone. Man was left with the flesh battling against the spirit, with darkness of mind and a rebellious nature, to live here in this world and then to be lost forever.

As St. Paul says, the Scripture hath concluded all under sin.

In Paradise, God taking pity on man, promised a redeemer, but God waited till the days of Abraham. You know how at the command of God this great patriarch was willing and got ready to sacrifice the son he loved so well, Isaac, overcoming all his natural feelings. That act of readiness and submis-

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sion was so different from, and contrary to, the rebellion of our first parents, and pleased God so much, that he promised Abraham, in his descendants, not to any but to one, Abraham, as the Apostle says, that the redeemer would come, not by a law, for then justice should have been by law—God would have owed to us, as the Apostle teaches—but by promise to Abraham, called therefore the Father of the Faithful.

Now, brethren, what does all this mean to us? It teaches us that we are born into this world as children of fallen parents, with the effects of their actual sin, in other words, in original sin. We did not commit it, we are not guilty of it, but through their sin we are deprived of all those great gifts and prerogatives which He had freely bestowed on them, which he did not owe to them by law or justice, and therefore he had the right to take them away, and so he did, and through the effects of that first actual sin, we have no right to heaven. Blame our first parents, but not God.

Because instead of letting us go to eternal perdition, he immediately in Paradise to our fallen parents He promises to redeem, and when Abraham, a man full of faith in God, shows his willingness

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to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, like God the Father, was ready to sacrifice his only begotten, God seals that promise within the direct line of his descendants.

Now, friends, you understand well then the doctrine of original sin, and you should clearly understand it. Never did our first parents, nor we, have any right to all those wonderful gifts of God. He owed man nothing. They were all free gifts, and if our first parents had been faithful, God would have crowned all these gifts by letting us inherit them from Adam and Eve, perfect happiness, no work, no suffering, no sickness, no death—see God's goodness and love.

When God took away all those free gifts, he did not leave us to our fate. The redeemer is promised in whom we can be reborn, that is, become the children of God by adoption through Jesus Christ, and regain all we lost through the fall of our first parents. You see very well this greatest of all blessings was not due to us, but came to us through and by the promise of God which he fulfilled in His Son, Jesus Christ.

There is the inestimable new birth, spiritual birth, which we receive in baptism, the grace which God



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owes to no one, which is freely given, and do you see how wrong and unchristian and sinful it is to keep children from being baptized through carelessness, neglect or foolish worldly motives?

And how we should treasure that grace which sealed us with the seal of God, stamped on our souls the image of God, which was, so to speak, effaced from our nature, through God not being willing to recognize us as His children unless reborn of water and the Holy Ghost.

How careful we should be not to destroy again that grace in our souls by sin, how we should guard and keep it, and how particular parents should be about the souls of their children. Oh, dear friends, I hope that not one of my parishioners will be so terribly neglectful in their duty as to allow a child to die without baptism. They have not sinned, but they are born deprived of all the gifts of God bestowed upon our first parents. They are not at fault, but you are, if you neglect to have them reborn in Jesus Christ, when you can easily bring them to be baptized. All are included under sin, but thank God, through the promise of God and its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, we are no more included under sin through the great and most necessary of all sacrament—Baptism.

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## Fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost

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“And they that are Christ’s have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences.”

It is a remarkable fact that men are so occupied in training animals. Why, we have dog trainers horse tamers and trainers, wild beast trainers, and fancy trainers that will teach animals—dogs, cats, even pigs—to perform certain maneuvers or tricks, simply for show or exhibition.

Then how we spend whole lives in cultivating the soil in order to get good crops; how we want to correct nature’s wildness according to our fancy, and we level mountains and fill hollows; how we lay out fine parks or pleasure grounds. We are cutting building material to suit our ideas to help build our homes. We are ever engaged in removing bushes or trees and planting new ones, to cultivate them. Are we not always engaged in trimming and cutting away the useless or wild, in order to make na-

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ture conform to our ideas or notions of symmetry and beauty?

Certainly it is very good and praiseworthy and necessary to do this. Why, if we would leave the fields alone and whatever the earth has built up in its wildness, we would have only a wilderness not fit to live in. Even the animals would not obey us or be useful to us. Nature and all that is in it need culture, training.

Now, friends, what about man? Does he not need training? If left to self, if not trained, he would be wilder than any field, more uncontrolled than any bush or tree, or thistle or thorn. Proof of this are the savages who are still living. Man needs training more than anything else in nature.

The rest of creation has not the intellect and free will which man possesses, and these are the great weapons of his untrained and unrestrained passionate nature.

And still the training of man is very often neglected, especially in children, by the parents and by those whose duty it is to train them.

Very often we train them to speak nicely, as the

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world calls it, and we carefully exercise them to move along gracefully. To help this mere external polish we dress them so nicely and attractively; we make them very nice, lovely looking, pet animals. But where is the training of the soul? Well, you know, that is not seen. We must teach them to be nice all around and act so captivatingly that everybody will like them and admire them.

God knows that I would like to see every one perfect in your exterior, and even cultured, but friends, if these accomplishments or training are simply on the outside, we may be trained animals—excuse me, I am only making a comparison—nicely trained monkeys who have learned their tricks well and draw the applause of the majority, but there is no real refinement or culture.

Now, man's nature must be cultivated, not merely his skin and outward appearance, but the beauty that shines on the outside must come from the interior. The finest and the most beautifying cosmetic is not paint or powder, but purity of soul. The truest politeness, that is, polish of manners, comes from a truthful and warm heart which naturally expresses what it feels.



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Passions have been laid low—not deadened, but kept under control, perfect control of the will, which is led by the intellect enlightened by faith and therefore the strong emotional feelings of an ardent, passionate nature are so many outlets for acts of sublime virtue and heroism.

Friends, St. Paul says this so correctly in his letter: "They that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences." They are true men, real Christians, perfect gentlemen, truly polished, and from the self-control which they possess, holding in check vice and concupiscence, they are beautiful with a beauty not merely skin-deep, but with beauty of character that makes them charming.

Their souls are the soil from which every thistle and thorn and weed and useless growth have been uprooted by the grace of God throwing its light upon that soil, and by the upright will pulling up all that is not of Christ, to plant the supernatural flowers, the fruit of the gospel.

How few people understand this well. It is the outward, as I have remarked. Give the outside of the house a good coat of paint, make it look nice,



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but care not what is within, even if the house were falling to pieces. Oh, folly!

Do we understand then the Christian life as St. Paul tells us or explains it to us? True Christians have crucified their flesh, their vices and concupiscences. The great enemy, our worst enemy, is not dead, but crucified. That means they do not control or lead us. Oh, no. We have them so perfectly under the control of the will that they cannot master us. They are crucified to the world so that they cannot go and indulge their cravings, and our flesh is crucified with them, and through the grace of God we become faithful imitators of Christ, the model and standard of all true greatness and civilization.

Understand this. Look now at the worldly man or woman; they have not crucified their flesh and vices and concupiscences; their natures are full of these terrible evils and their lives are full of passion. How they polish the exterior, the face, the hands, their appearance, their dress—a mere bit of outward varnish, a whitened sepulchre, as Christ calls them, and then look at the Christian with a soul controlling all the passions, with a mind well stored with Christian knowledge and a heart full of Christian charity. Their every look and action is true politeness—true Christianity.

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## Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost

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St. Paul writes to the Galatians and says: "Therefore whilst we have time, let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

The advice which St. Paul gives in his letter which we read to-day is very important and contains advice which I am afraid a great many of us overlook, and by so doing we are neglectful of our duty, both as regards doing good and in the way of doing it.

Whilst we have time let us do good to all men. There is the command of true Christian charity which we should be practicing every day of our lives—to do some good, and do it to all and for all. If we understand this well we will never allow a day to pass without saying something kind or consoling or doing some act of mercy and charity towards some one for the sake of our Lord.

If we do not accomplish this we are losing time, and therefore squandering one of the greatest blessings of life—time and the means of doing good.

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We must, however, remember that our likes and dislikes will influence us very much in the doing of good to all men unless we are on our guard to prevent our pet feelings to run away with us.

Have we not all our favorites? We call them dear friends; we would not offend them for the whole world; we would do everything for them. Well this is very good and praiseworthy. Our divine Lord had his favorite Apostle, St. John.

But, my friends, as St. Paul says, do good unto all men, Jew and gentile, heathen, non-Catholics—yes all, but kindly take notice of this—but especially to those who are of the household of the faith. Do we follow that advice?

In social life, are those whom we call our friends and generally form our company. Are they Catholics? I mean the majority of them, or did we or do we move in non-Catholic circles of friends for some very strange and not solid reasons? The Catholics, perhaps, are not so well educated; it is a club but composed exclusively of non-Catholics; my standing in society brings me with the non-Catholics; the Catholics that are here are not fit company for me, I am actually forced to be with non-Catholics. These are the ones you visit, and you spend hours and

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hours in their company. When they are sick you are by their bedside. You do well, but not to all men. Fashion and society are the motives that prompt you. Those of the household you neglect. Do you ever visit with Catholic families, especially when they are rather poor and not so fashionable, according to the world? When they are sick are you by their bedside. You are very punctual at feasts and festivals and entertainments; do you not rather go to non-Catholic sociables and entertainments than to those given by Catholics and for a good, charitable purpose?

Mind well, there is no question here of prejudice or bigotry, of ill feeling. God forbid. I want every one of you to be as kind and charitable to our non-Catholic friends as possible, but remember, true charity begins at home, with those of our own household.

Under a mistaken idea of zeal for the conversion of these good people, we can build up a big wall of excuses and hide behind it and neglect our first care, those of our own.

There are a great many men and women who belong to societies and are even officials in them. They are for the care of truants and abandoned, or



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bad or degraded children, and they work and labor, in the meantime neglecting their own children who are running wild and turn out bad. Go and first take care of our own.

Every one of us should be very zealous and desirous about the conversion of the non-Catholics, and, indeed, we should not only pray but work for their conversion and salvation, as our Lord died for them as well as for us who are in the fold. But would you not offer more fervent prayers and work more diligently for the return of one of your children who is wayward than for a great many who are not your own?

There is precisely the true spirit of the Church, as expressed by the words of the Apostle. First, our own. If we bring back one sinner fallen away from the Church we will please God more and do more good, than to bring non-Catholics and neglect our own.

There seems to be a feeling that we should run after them and make friends and be very liberal and coax them to come to Church, and there are not a few so-called Catholics who feel honored to stand in with them, especially if they happen to be



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wealthy or prominent, and very frequently instead of doing good by fawning upon them, and running after them, they begin to compromise and minimize their faith and many have thus lost it.

Mind well, be good to them, but first to your Catholic friends and neighbors. If you would lead an exemplary Catholic life and show your zeal first for your Catholic brethren, and then pray and work for the non-Catholics, you would observe the advice of the Apostle.

And even in business, if a Catholic sells goods or transacts business as well as our non-Catholics do, in price and quality, friends be good to all, but especially to those of the faith.

If your own father, mother, brother or sister kept a store and treated you as well as a stranger, would you do right to deal with the stranger instead of with your own? Could the other storekeepers take it amiss or find fault with you for dealing with your own in preference to strangers?

Why, club members, lodge members, society members trade with one another because they are members.

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Brethren, are we not members of God's Church, related in Jesus Christ, a higher relationship than flesh and blood? Do you see your Christian duty towards one another? I say, go do this and live—live the life of a Christian.

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## Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost

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To-day we read the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians. He tells them that he prays to God that the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, may fill their hearts unto all the fullness of God.

My dear people in God, I too pray to Him that the same charity may fill your hearts—charity unto all the fullness of God. When this sublime gift will fill your hearts you will be perfect Christians.

In the exercise of charity, or rather in performing charitable actions, there are various motives. There is diplomacy—well, if we do them good they may do us good in return; we never know when we may need them. Again, one good turn deserves another—they have helped us, they are kind to us, we owe it to them; we must do it. Another reason—they are friends of our friends; if we do not act kindly our friends will find out; we are bound to do it.

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These motives are good, and if we persevere in a good life through these motives, God will no doubt save us. But yet we are never entirely safe. The things of this world are so enticing and tempting that they make us forget the fact of eternal punishment or reward, but give me the charity, the love of Christ and let this divine virtue be the motive of our thoughts and actions and our hearts will be filled with that charity unto the fullness of God.

Love is ingenuous, love is generous, love is self-sacrificing, and with these three qualities it can and will accomplish all.

Let the soul be filled with this charity or love, and it wants to imitate, even to emulate the charity of Jesus Christ.

That soul never questions whether it is bound to go or to act, whether the neglect or deed will or does offend God grievously or not, such a thought never enters the mind of the God-loving soul. Its only thought and desire is to please God, to do as much for God as it possibly can and to do it for God, leaving to Him the giving of the reward, trusting Him so, because we know Him to be our father, so He will never be wanting unto us.

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Such a soul is the personification and realization of generosity. It cannot do enough for that God who gave Himself all and all to us. That soul wants and tries to give herself to God all and all and live only for Him.

Going to Church, hearing the word of God, assisting at mass and devotions are so congenial to that soul, and her greatest delight is to receive her God in Holy Communion.

That person is a model Christian. The charity of Christ urges on that soul to sublime virtue. Nothing seems hard or difficult, nothing is impossible to her, for the love of God prompts her, and there is nothing small or base in her mind or heart. How could it be when she is filled with the fullness of the love of God?

Hence, when the altar or the Church, for there is the home of the living God; or the poor, for they are the living images of God, need anything, there is no diplomacy or business tact; the gift generous and plentiful comes straight from the heart in abundance as the fruit of divine love.

Oh, dearly beloved ones in Jesus Christ, how I do pray that my poor heart and yours may be filled



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with that generous love of God, then I would never have to exhort you to come to mass, to services, to holy communion; nor would I have to beg for means to support the altar, the school and the Church and the poor of the parish. God grant my prayer—let us all be filled with that sublime spirit and in its fullness unto God.

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## Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost

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St. Paul writes to the Ephesians: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all."

Let us try this morning to understand the meaning of these clear words of the great Apostle, as it will help us to appreciate our faith and strengthen us in it.

One Lord. What is Lordship but mastery over us? Did not our Lord buy us by the shedding of His own blood? God was our Lord and Master, but by rebellion we were rejected by Him and became outcasts. Christ redeemed us, that is, paid for us, rebought us, and by the price or redemption He acquired full right and power of Lord over us. It is not a mastery over slaves, though we were made so by sin, as conquerors in war acquire the vanquished becoming the slaves of the conqueror. It is a conquest of freedom, and all those who will of

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their free accord submit to the Lord Jesus Christ shall be set free with the freedom of God.

All those who will not acknowledge Christ as Lord will remain slaves of Satan and outcasts of God. It was the right to become again the children of God, and to regain the right of inheritance to heaven that our Lord bought from His Father by paying dearly for it with His passion and death. Therefore the price of our souls is the whole meritorious life, and above all the sufferings and death of Jesus. This is the Lordship which He acquired over the whole creation, and therefore we cannot be the children of God, nor secure any right to heaven except through Jesus Christ. The domain of grace and salvation is exclusively His own. There He is Lord.

St. Paul tells us that there is but one Lord. Yes, one Lord, one Redeemer, one Savior, one Mediator with the Father. He is the only way. No one can reach the Father except through Him. Therefore there is no supernatural or divine in this world except Christ. Outside of Him no one can have access to the Father, no one can lay claim unto salvation. For any one attempting so bold a scheme



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would trespass on the Lordship of Christ and assume the power and prerogative of God the Son.

Does this not teach us clearly that outside of Jesus Christ, who alone has absolute dominion over earth and heaven, who alone is the only mediator between God and man, there is no salvation possible, that we must go to Him for it, that we must obtain it from Him, by receiving His doctrine and by following His example.

Lord and Master; He alone can place the conditions necessary for salvation and only as we comply with them or fulfill them, shall He and can He, give salvation.

This, beyond all doubt, teaches us that we must receive the doctrine of Christ just as He teaches it, and follow His commandments just as He gives them. Now He has, as I will explain to you on some other occasion, left His doctrine and commands to an infallible tribunal called the Church, which teaches and commands precisely what He taught and commanded.

Therefore the Apostle adds, "one faith." How could there be more than one, if there is but one Lord. He has the infallible and absolute truth of

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God. How could he possibly teach any other but that truth? If that were possible, He would contradict Himself and belie the Father who sent Him.

As sin is rebellion to God, so the Son of God, by becoming Lord of all creation, makes it a necessary condition of salvation that man shall receive the doctrine of His Father by submission of the human intellect to the truth of God and by obeying the commands, humble his rebellious will to the will of God so through Christ to become reconciled to God.

Hence it is clear to you that all beliefs and practices are worthless and vain except Christian faith, the true correct faith in Jesus Christ. Nothing else can be acceptable to God.

Still further, the Apostle adds, "one baptism," that is, regeneration, a second birth, higher and nobler than the natural birth of man into this physical world. In the United States you are not considered a citizen unless native born, but if not native born you must take out your naturalization papers, that is, you must be reborn nationally, and renounce all allegiance to any foreign potentate or power. So in Christ, you must be reborn spiritually, and from the depths of your soul renounce all alle-

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giance to sin and Satan, and thus become ingrafted upon Jesus Christ.

Remember the Apostle says one baptism, and therefore Christian baptism, baptism in Jesus Christ is the only regenerating power on earth. Water, as the outward sign in the act of cleansing, but of the Holy Ghost, who is one with Christ, otherwise there is no baptism, hence the Church is so particular about the administration of baptism, as it is the most necessary sacrament for salvation. It is the priest who is the ordinary minister of that one Lord and one faith, who administers that necessary sacrament, and at any time, if there should arise a valid doubt about our baptism, that necessary sacrament must be administered again, at least conditionally.

How well does the great Apostle climb, as it were, from the one Lord, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to the one faith in Him, to infuse into us the eternal life of that Christian faith through baptism, and thus lead us to the one God, our Father. If we reflect well upon these words they explain in a very simple manner the whole plan of salvation.

We should not look for salvation to anyone but Christ, who is truly our Lord and Master, and by believing in Him through faith, which is one as He

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is one, and being reborn in Him, we reach unto God, the Father of all, one Christ, one Christian faith, one Christian baptism, and thus heir and coheir of Christ unto God our Father.

Hence the words of God: "He that shall believe and be baptized shall be saved." Unless you are reborn of water and the Holy Ghost you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Let me draw the final conclusion: As there is but one Christ, one faith, one baptism, one God, so there can only be one Church, the Church of Jesus Christ, the groundwork and pillar of truth.

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## Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost

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The letter from which I read to you to-day is from St. Paul to the Corinthians. I take these words from it: "I give thanks to my God, always for you, that in all things you are made rich in Jesus Christ, in all utterance and knowledge."

Most people are very anxious to be rich, and to acquire wealth they will make every effort, and leave nothing undone to secure it at any cost—early rising, heavy, constant work, even late at night, work, toil to secure riches.

And when they obtain them, either by inheritance or hard work, and have in their possession enough means to call themselves rich, what can they do with them?

We will suppose that no misfortune befalls them, but that they can use and spend that wealth to the best advantage, for woe to the fool who has wealth, for it simply brings disgrace and poverty upon him.



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Well, we can live happily, we will build a beautiful home and furnish it elegantly and decorate it lavishly. Everything will be of the very best; money will be no consideration; we will only look to comfort and ease and beauty. A very choice piece of ground is bought. It is so situated that it will afford light and air in abundance. It will overlook charming scenery, mountains, fine prairies, streams and valleys, and nicely laid-out gardens. Truly an ideal spot. Money cannot buy anything nicer.

Will it not be a Paradise to live in? Everything will be first class; the sleeping apartments with southern exposure fit for a king; the parlors and reception rooms how rich and tastefully furnished to receive and entertain the whole family and many friends and neighbors for domestic and social gatherings.

Our dress shall be the source of envy in others. Of course it shall be perfectly fitting and most becoming to our wealthy and prominent position in society. Most costly jewelry will shine in the brilliant and countless lights that will turn day into night.

See what money, riches and wealth can secure for us. O happy we can be, if we are only rich. Well,

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should any sickness, or even any danger of disease come near us, our money can bring to us the specialist, the experienced doctor, and buy the costliest medicine for us. What more can we desire? O give us wealth and we can buy everything. This is the alluring glitter and power of gold which has become the God of many, because to secure it and live for it is the aim of the vast majority of people.

Hear our Lord advising us to become rich, but to lay up treasures in heaven, where the moth cannot spoil nor rust reach them. What then is true wealth, true riches? Let one of those wealthy people about whom I have spoken to you so far, *die*, where is all the wealth? Gone.

O dear friends, remember the words of the Apostle: "I thank God that in all things you are made rich in Jesus Christ." The inheritance he left us is not merely of earth, but of heaven. We must go to the moral and supernatural world to see and appreciate our wealth and riches in Jesus Christ.

Let a babe be born in the home of plenty and luxury. Envy it not, for we have been reborn in the Church, the home of Jesus Christ, into His divine kingdom unto a new life which is the supernatural

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life of grace, never to be lost, but to be lived into the eternal mansions of God.

In the strict sense of the word we do not possess riches—gold, silver, jewelry. We have only the use of them for a time, but the riches of Christ become ours, truly ours, in the inmost depths of our soul. We enjoy them, and no one can reach them to deprive us of them. One ray of light of God's grace makes our soul, our hearts, more brilliant than all the reception rooms and halls made brighter than day by electric devices. These light up earth; the ray of grace lights up the soul, and it is a heavenly light, coming directly from heaven.

Our homes in Christ are our souls built by the Almighty hand of God, but furnished and decorated by the Holy Ghost, in imprinting in them and upon them Christ, the splendor of heaven, and bringing to them all the riches that Jesus gave us as our inheritance.

Real happiness cannot be bought with money; it must be in the heart; it must be secure for time and eternity. Can earthly riches secure this? Never.

We must be able to tell of our wealth, and not ex-

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aggerate, as most people do. Well, a true Christian, as I hope every one of you is, can tell of Christ in all utterance and knowledge.

The Christian heart is the broad and vast reception hall for all. It is finer than any temple of God built by the inspiration and wealth of good Catholics; vast for all, yes, for the divine charity that dwells within, embraces every human being.

Talk of ancestry, noble blood, buying of titles. Well, indeed, and can there be nobler blood than that of Jesus Christ, greater ancestry than the countless army of our forefathers in the faith, embracing within the fold the deepest intellects and purest hearts that ever thought or loved on earth? Titles, can there be a higher title than that of being a Christian allied to Jesus Christ?

Ye worldly people, wealthy with gold, silver, diamonds, have your banquets, bring from afar your costly dishes, make the spread fit for kings and queens and all the nobility of the world, distribute costly souvenirs as you are wont to do, but the Christian banquet, Holy Communion, what do you think of this, Jesus entering our souls to feed them with His own flesh and blood?

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When sickness comes consult your specialists, spend a fortune on medicines, but as for a Christian, though he will not neglect doctors and drugs, he will look upon sickness as a visitation from God. Should death come near, the Christian will welcome it as the time when he will be in possession of his real inheritance—*heaven*. Which of the two is the richer, the worldly-rich or the Christ-rich? Give the correct answer and act accordingly.



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## Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost

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The Apostle in his letter to-day says to the Ephesians: "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak ye the truth, every man with his neighbor, for we are members one of another."

Remark how the Apostle strongly advises the first Christians not to forget that they were members one of another. Our fellowship and brotherhood of God, in Jesus Christ, unite us more closely than the ties of flesh and blood. So few people seem to realize this, and notwithstanding this moral, supernatural and divine membership, they hide or keep from one another truth, which by its nature belongs to all, is, so to speak, common property, and therefore to hide it from one another is wrong.

But, if to hide the truth is wrong, it is far worse to speak against it, for God is truth, and to speak against the truth is to speak against God.

To speak against the truth is wrong in itself, independently of all circumstances, for it means to

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substitute falsehood for truth, which is indeed very wrong, and goes directly against God and man.

The Apostle tells us "not to give place to the devil," for we all know that he is the father of lies. He started in Paradise by lying to our first parents, and whenever he brings people to ruin it is by lying.

Now, we give place to the devil by listening to him, by allowing him to tempt us, by not immediately resisting his attack, but letting him deceive us by his lies. Certainly this is very bad, and will bring about our ruin.

But if it is so bad and wrong to give place to the devil by listening to him, how much worse is it to play devil by telling lies, and become a follower of the father of lies, and deceive our neighbors, our own, forgetting that we are members one of another?

Lying is unfortunately a very common fault or sin, and if we are not careful we will very readily and quickly acquire the habit of lying, which will spoil our character, destroy all confidence in ourselves as well as in others, and do a great deal of harm.

Generally, people think little of a lie. Why, they say, they cannot help telling them; they are often

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forced to tell them; they at times must tell them to avoid or prevent greater evil, and the effect of all such excuses brings on the mean, hypocritical habit of lying and of deceiving one another.

Here we must apply the words of the Holy Ghost: "He that is negligent in small things shall be negligent in greater things," and by telling what people call small lies, we gradually lose all respect for truth, and tell falsehoods so grievous and so injurious that we fall into mortal sin.

It is a deplorable fact that children, unless well trained and impressed by good Christian parents, frequently acquire that ugly habit, which grows on them, and they very often, in after life, keep up that habit, which is so ruinous to virtue and to a good Christian life.

Therefore, the Apostle says it in unmistakable words, "Speak ye the truth, putting away all lying," and you know very well that we suspect one another very quickly of lying when they say something to us which seems strange. Does that not prove that the words of the Apostle must be repeated to us?

Seeing how easily that habit is acquired, and how common this ugly sin is amongst us, I would

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strongly advise parents, superiors and teachers not to force a child or drive it so, to tell the truth about itself or others when some fault has been committed, or some wrong has been done, for we expose it, we almost drive it, to deny the truth. A lie of this kind hurts the child forever.

But lies become very grievous sins and very damaging in their effects when we lie about our neighbor, when we tell of him what is not true, either to shift responsibility from ourselves to him, or through spite or jealousy. May God save us from such lying.

Even more grievous when we belie or contradict the teachings of God or of the Church, which sin goes directly against God by giving the lie to divine truth, or thus to God Himself. This is the terrible sin of willful heresy.

Do I say that you must tell the truth always? I answer, yes, always, and on some occasions you are bound, under pain of mortal sin, to tell the truth; for instance, when you are a witness in a court of justice. Then tell the truth honestly before God, for there you are under oath, and if you should dare tell a lie you would be guilty of a terrible sin called perjury. It means you dare call God to witness that what you say is true, and yet you know it is a lie.

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There are, however, many occasions in which we are not bound to tell others what we know; for instance, our own private family affairs, the faults of our neighbor, our own private affairs, but remember not to tell things of that kind and keep them secret, for prudence's sake, is quite different from telling lies. To keep the truth which is private and deliberately to tell lies are as different as good and evil.

My dearly beloved brethren, if any one of us has been lying, break that habit, root it out of your hearts, and acquire the habit of speaking the truth in all sincerity one to another, as members of one another, for the sake of God; our Father, through the Charity of Jesus Christ.



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## Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost

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St. Paul writes to the Ephesians: "See, brethren, how you walk circumspectly, not as unwise, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil."

I need not try to convince you, dear friends, that the days are evil. You know that as well, better than I do, for you see the world more directly than I do, as your daily life necessarily brings you in contact with the world.

When the Apostle warns you to walk circumspectly, he does not intend to tell you to be on your guard about being cheated or robbed. You can and generally do take care of that, but he advises you to live in this world, full of evil days, in wisdom, in the wisdom of God.

How shall we be wise, with that wisdom of God? The truly wise, the Apostle tells us, walk circumspectly, that is, they have their eyes wide open, look around carefully, as they have to walk through

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this world full of evil days. Avoid all the snares placed before them, and redeem the time.

How useful and necessary that advice, "Be on your guard, but take care to redeem the time." So it is not enough to steer clear of worldliness and its temptations, but we must make good use of time, the days and years of life given to us to lay by merit—not to squander time.

I would like every one of you to examine your conscience, and see before God whether you are making good use of the time that God gives you or whether you are squandering it.

Have you, do you follow any method in your way of living, or do you live like barbarians, out of one day into another, carried along by circumstances as they come to us, and losing a great deal of time?

The proper use of time is one of the greatest blessings of our life, and to profit by it is simply to carry out the purpose for which God gives it to us.

Could we not do a great deal more during the day than we are doing at present? Mind, I do not mean by hurrying or rushing, for then little or nothing is accomplished, and what we do is done negligently or carelessly, but I mean if we had some plan or method both as regards what we do and when we do it, in other words, were we to have regularity in

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our daily life, we would culture ourselves, we would be self-possessed and we would live orderly; and as God's first law is order, it would be more easy for us to live for God.

Our daily life is what we make it. We live it gradually and by successive actions, and regularity makes life worth living. Our life is rational and only fit for us, as men, and especially as Christians, in as far as there is method in our life.

A regular life has a very deep bearing on our conscience, and generally the exterior manner in which we live is a sure sign of the state of our moral and spiritual life.

If people would put method, order, into their daily way of living, how much time could they spare to be spent in self improvement, for the good and welfare of their soul.

Most lives, and this fact is to be deplored, are simple mechanical actions, servile in nature, wearing away physical strength, but not improving the human character, rather leaving the mind void and empty, and the heart cold and unhappy.

Can you so arrange your daily occupations—and if not during the week, at least on Sundays—to

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spend a few hours in useful reading, one of the most conducive means to self improvement, to store the mind with useful information and warm the heart unto healthful and Christian practices? Can you not read to those at home and thus bring the family together to share in the beneficent effects of good Catholic or historical reading. You understand I do not mean light or frivolous reading.

Can you not so arrange your home duties as to be able to assist at mass, even on week days, or at least to come in time on Sundays and days of obligation, especially if you have been, perhaps, in the habit of coming late?

Can you not make it convenient to have a regular time, once a month or at least several times a year, to approach the sacraments? Above all, can you not with very little effort have family prayer morning and evening? Can you not teach your children to live with regularity and method?

This advice, moreover, means to do all things with order and regularity and to do them well. It simply means to live your lives as rational and human beings should live, and above all to live like Christians.

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Set to work; let not these wise words of Christian advice given to us by the Apostle and read to you to-day for your instruction, go in one ear and out by the other. Make out for yourself some order of living regularly—a proper time to rise, not squandering valuable time in prolonging the hours of sleep late into the day, a time for morning and evening family prayer, a time for improving your mind and heart, a time to go to church, to go to the sacraments, so that by your redeeming time you may make up for past negligences, you may live like a good Christian should live—a life of merit, filled with thoughts and actions of Christian virtues, a life worthy of God, a model life fit to be imitated by those around us.



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## Twenty-first Sunday After Pentecost

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St. Paul says to the Ephesians: "Therefore take unto you the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect."

St. Paul in his letter to-day mentions the means which Christ has placed at our disposal for obtaining the complete victory over all our enemies. As such, do you not think that we should know these means, and know likewise when and how to use them?

Our enemies are so powerful and strong, so experienced, so cunning, and we are surrounded by them on all sides. As St. Paul writes, our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places, therefore he says, "Prepare for battle, arm yourselves."

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For a great many people it is difficult to understand the nature of this battle, what is at stake and which are the weapons we must use. We will consider these things in the instruction of to-day.

The nature of this battle, which is lifelong, for the life of man is a perpetual warfare; is for spirit over matter, purity over immorality, sobriety over drunkenness, generosity over avarice, self-sacrifice over selfishness, zeal over sloth, virtue over crime, God over Satan, heaven over hell. No one can be neutral, you must fight and you are actually fighting on one of the sides: "He who is not with me is against me." No one of us can be idle for a moment. From morning till night our enemies are attacking us and waging an unceasing war against us. They never rest, especially our arch-enemy, about whom St. Peter says he goes around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

The battle is not in an open field with soldiers in line; the struggle goes on when we are alone or with others, at home or abroad, day and night. All attacks are well planned and ingeniously covered. The plan is to entice us with pleasing representations, with lies that have the appearance of truth, with pleasures that seem so enjoyable, holding out

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under the false mask wreck and ruin, and our enemies, the devil and the world, allure our flesh unto concupiscence.

Now on our part, by nature and by the fall, we are very weak and little prepared to battle with such enemies, so numerous and so cunning. We carry within our natures a traitor—our flesh with its passionate impulses and cravings, ever, as the Apostle says battling against the spirit. The spirit itself, weakened in intellect and will by that miserable fall. Our heart for each one of us is the battlefield. Our enemies will take that fortress unless we battle successfully. The two great armies of Christ and antichrist, of God and of Satan are engaged in this great struggle, and I am either in the army of Christ or that of antichrist, and that struggle shall last until I close my eyes in death.

And what is at stake, as the result of that fierce, lifelong struggle between all those powerful enemies and our weak, fallen natures. Brethren, everything is at stake—God's honor and glory, the triumph of Christ over Satan, of virtue over vice, of all that is good and noble over all that is vile and contemptible; but above all, our temporal and eternal welfare, our great reward which our divine Leader, Jesus

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Christ, will bestow on all those who struggle under his banner—the Crucified, from Whom all power flows.

In Paradise the devil deceived our first parents. Satan could not reach God directly. He had been baffled and crushed in his proud and foolish attempt to place his throne next to that of the Almighty, and therefore he swore revenge on God's image, and by his lies and deception caused them to rebel against God. Therefore God will conquer Satan and humble him and crush him through man. Under the standard of the cross God will raise an army of volunteers who will give battle to Satan and conquer him and all his followers through the power of Jesus Christ, their leader. How noble the Christian soldier, under the leadership of Jesus crushing the enemies of God and his own by the humility and irresistible power of the cross.

And what are our weapons? Oh, friends of ourselves, we have none. Besides, all the weapons we could make would be useless. As well might poor, ignorant and weak savages flatter themselves that they can successfully fight our modern armies with their guns and torpedoes and every war material of late construction—poor savages using their old bows



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and arrows. My friends, unless we get help and reinforcements from some source or other, God's cause, Christ's cause and ours is lost. We need supernatural and divine help. Thank God, we have an arsenal filled and stored with every weapon we may need in the great struggle.

With Christ as our leader, He who crushed sin, death and hell, who understands the snares of His enemies and ours, has with divine wisdom supplied the weapons with which we can easily overcome all our enemies.

No fortifications were ever so strong and impregnable as ours. The mind, through faith in Jesus Christ, is so clear-sighted it readily sees through the snares and wiles of the enemy like a modern searchlight laying bare the enemy and uncovering all his plans and preparations. The will, through the grace of God, leans upon God. The Apostle says: "Put ye on therefore the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil." "Therefore take unto you the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect." He describes the armor of God in full: "Have your loins girt with truth; have the breastplate of justice, the feet shod with the



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preparation of the gospel of peace; the shield of faith; the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit"—that is, the word of God. Now, brethren, thus equipped, let us go to battle. Remember, our sufficiency is from God through Christ. We are fighting for Him, for His triumph. Therefore He is with us as Leader and with His grace in our hearts, with His angels to assist us, our victory is secure.

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## Twenty-second Sunday After Pentecost

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The letter of St. Paul to the Philippians: "We are confident of this very thing, that He who had begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ."

From these words of the Apostle we must understand that God, who has begun a good work in us—that is, the work of making us His children—will perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ—will make us perfect Christians like our Lord, our model.

For that very reason Jesus told His hearers: "Be ye perfect even as my Heavenly Father is perfect," placing before us the infinite perfection of the Father for our imitation, though He knew very well that we are human, poor and frail.

In order to make this imitation possible, and easy for us, the Son of God comes into this world and becomes like one of us, so that He can show us the

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perfection of His Father in His daily life. How little do we understand the elevation of our nature unto God through Christ.

Most people when they hear us preach, or when they read, about perfection, they immediately imagine that in order to reach perfection we must do something very wonderful—work a miracle, fast all the time, stay in Church from morning until night, never raise our eyes to look at anything, be always reciting or saying prayers, never laugh or have any enjoyment or lawful amusement, never to be tempted, never to feel deeply moved, never to weep even if our dearest and nearest relatives would die—in short, a most unfeeling, unnatural being, living on air and so completely wrapt in deep meditation that we never see or hear anything in this world.

Being led astray by such vagaries of a diseased imagination, we find that such a life is simply impossible for us, and therefore we cannot be perfect or be a saint.

Thank God, perfection does not consist in doing or thinking of any of such things extraordinary and generally impossible. The Kingdom of God is within us, and as our infallible teacher, Christ, our Lord,

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made no special conditions and no exception as to time and place. It follows that perfection, which is obligatory on all, is, and must be, something easy—within the reach of all, and at all times and places. According to the command of our Lord, we should live a perfect life *always*, and ever be prepared to die, for we know neither the day nor the hour when He may call us.

Every one cannot preach the gospel, say mass, hear confessions; every one cannot go to communion and holy mass every day; every one has not the time to say long prayers every day, or to visit the sick, and yet the command of our Lord wants all to be perfect with the perfection of His Heavenly Father. It is clear from this that perfection must be something very simple, within the reach of rich and poor, capitalist and laborer, no matter what our profession or trade or occupation may be.

This being clearly understood, let us try to find it. And where shall we look for it, except in our Lord, the model of the elect, the exemplar which the Father has sent us for our imitation.

Christ was perfect with the perfection of His Heavenly Father at all times and in all places,

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whether lying in the manger, motionless and speechless, or preaching or working miracles or suffering or dying on the cross, always the same Christ and always perfect with the perfection of the Father. Besides, every act of Christ was equally meritorious—to fold His hands in prayer, to help His foster father or dear mother at Nazereth, even in the most common actions of daily life, sweeping, running errands, was just as meritorious as preaching and fasting and working wonders.

Let us not look so much to the exterior of the action—it may be showy, brilliant, astonishing, even miraculous—but it is not so much what we do, as how we do it.

Are not the majority of people placed in the most humble positions and occupations of life? How could they be perfect when every one of their daily actions is outwardly mere routine and drags them along.

Thank God, our model performed housework and common labor; He was poor, He was considered by all the neighbors who knew Him as the son of a carpenter, proving to us that there was nothing in His outward conduct very striking or wonderful.



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Oh, great sanctity! Oh, perfection of the Heavenly Father as taught by the infallible model Christ!

It mattered not which action He performed, for every action came from the same divine mind, for the same divine intention. There was the soul of His actions that made them perfect with divine perfection. He did all because His Father so willed it. "The will of God is our sanctification." And therefore perfection, divine perfection, consists in doing our daily, common, simple, insignificant actions for God, because He wants us to do these as they belong to our state of life; but sanctify them, perfect them by doing them for God in imitation of Jesus Christ.

Is it not a most consoling thought that all of us can imitate Christ so closely? that Christ by His life and example has placed divine perfection within our reach?

From morning till night you can grow more and more perfect; every one of your daily actions can be made a bright link in the chain of life to reach unto God so that the good work which God has begun in you may reach the perfection of the Father.

Can we not unite our intentions to those of our Lord? He had to rest during night; He worked dur-

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ing day; He ate to support His human nature, and every act was an act of infinite merit and divine perfection. As St. Paul says: "Whatever you do, do it for the honor and glory of God."

Thank God, brethren, that we can be perfect with the perfection of our Heavenly Father; that we never have to lose a single moment of time—all and everywhere and at all times live for God.

You, dear people, that have to work so hard for a living, you, dear mothers, that have to help take care of the household, do not lose all the merit, but by performing every action well, for God and in imitation of Jesus, how much merit can you store for yourselves in the Kingdom of God; how you will increase daily in perfection. And so, all of us should imitate our Lord every day of our lives and so carry out the command of our Lord: "Be ye perfect, even as your Heavenly Father is perfect."

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## Twenty-third Sunday After Pentecost

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St. Paul tells the Philippians that: "Many walk, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame."

From these words of the Apostle it is clear that in his day there were Christians who, notwithstanding the preaching of the Apostle, led bad lives and followed their evil inclinations, rather than the instructions of their pastors.

It is so in our day, and there is scarcely a pastor in charge of a congregation but he can justly say about some members of his congregation what the Apostle said about those confided to their care.

Is it not astonishing that people who have been baptized in Jesus Christ, who have received the gift of faith, that supernatural light in which we see God and believe in Him, and at whose disposal

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Christ has left so many means, which if used properly would make saints of them, should squander all these blessings and deaden that divine faith by sin, and become, as the Apostle says, enemies of God, and we may add, enemies to themselves.

Let me turn to you, dear ones in Christ Jesus, and ask you, Are there not some, oh, I dare not say many, in our midst to whom we might justly apply the words of the Apostle?

Are there any enemies of the cross in our midst? If so, what are they. The cross stands for humility, self-sacrifice, redemption and Christian victory, the standard and banner of Christ which alone can and did conquer all that is low and vile and contemptible. Its enemies therefore are in league with the proud and self-conceited; they are slaves of their passions, slaves of the world and of Satan. Like the demons, they hate the very sight of the cross; they are leading low, vile and contemptible lives; they are fighting the battle for Satan, sin and hell. Satan is their leader. They are ashamed of Christ; they adore not His cross, but the vanities of the world; they are so deeply steeped in sin that they cannot see the glory of the cross of Christ—enemies to everything which is moral and pure and just,

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proud with the pride of Lucifer, they depise the humility of Christ, His poor, His faithful followers.

No wonder that the Apostle says, their end is destruction—to themselves and to others. How in themselves they deaden every trace of God and of His holy grace; how they deliberately extinguish in themselves the light of faith; how, gradually, they actually hate God and Christ; how they cannot bear even the sight of a church or of a priest or of a good, practical Catholic. Just like a good Christian tries to become like our Lord and make great efforts to imitate Him, so they try to become like Satan, and in their hatred of anything pure or holy, resemble their infernal leader, Satan. How true are the words of our Lord, “No one can serve two masters. You will hate one and love the other.”

What is the aim of Satan? To destroy or to interfere with, the Kingdom of Christ, especially in the souls of the faithful, and all this on account of his hatred to God. And those who are enemies of the cross help the devil, who makes his followers hate the cross to bring spiritual destruction to all in this life and in the next. How blindly they follow their master to eternal destruction.



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They go around, like their vile lying master, and like roaring lions, seek whom they may devour by their evil conversations, by their bad example, and especially by the total neglect of their religion. Truly, they are enemies of the cross, and as the end of the cross is salvation, so theirs is destruction.

How terrible the words, "Their god is their belly." The animal cravings of flesh and blood. They live only for eating and in many cases, only for drink. The cup of drink is their god; in it they drown every feeling of faith, of manhood and self-respect. If their god is their belly, then God, Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, are dethroned, and look at the enemy of the cross, whose end is destruction, kneeling before and adoring the worst passions of our depraved nature. Can there be idolatry more degrading and abominable? Is your god your belly? Do you, through your slavery to your own low cravings of that body, neglect and trample under foot the wise laws of the Church as regards moderation in eating and drinking, in regard to fast and abstinence in Advent, in Lent and on other days prescribed by the Church? Do you always yield to every desire of flesh and blood? Then your belly is your god; you idolize your corrupt fallen nature, and your end is destruction.

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But, worse than all, the Apostle adds, they glory in their shame. The idea of glorying in such a life, aye, boasting of it! If a man with a little sense happens to make a mistake, forgets himself for the time being, and falls, does he not try to hide that shame? Does he go and boast about it? Well, judge of the folly of the enemies of the cross. They are so blind and proud in their own shame that instead of hiding it, they boast of it and glory in it, which glory, the Apostle says, is shame.

We despise effrontery and open defiance in a guilty criminal. When a fallen man or woman is beyond all self-respect, has lost all shame, we say that they are beyond redemption. Well, friends, what shall we say about those who have received the gift of faith, and by sin lost it, and have become enemies of Christ and of all that is good and noble, and degrade themselves, are lost to all self-respect and remorse, and are so far above shame that they boast of their shameful lives.? Do they not deserve to be branded as enemies of society, of decency, of morality, more to be shunned than lepers who would vitiate every one who comes in contact with them?

How terrible their downfall. They began by neglecting to hear the word of God, by indulging in

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their animal passions, and they now are enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction. Their god is their belly, their glory is in their shame. Let us turn away from them in disgust and horror, and follow the advice which the Apostle gives us in the same letter: "Therefore, my dearly beloved, stand fast in the Lord." Yes, remain firm. Be not affected by the laugh and the scorn and the contempt which the wicked give you. Follow Christ and the brethren who are the admirers and lovers of His cross. Thus, in the words of the great Apostle, "to reform the body of our lowliness through Jesus Christ, and to make it like to the body of His glory unto life everlasting."

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## Twenty-fourth Sunday After Pentecost

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“We cease not to pray for you, that you may walk worthy of God.”

Beloved friends, we should all have enough of self-respect and family pride, so-called, to make us feel and realize that we are not living for ourselves alone, that there are others about whom we should have some concern, and that in this world we are responsible for another. You are aware that societies or clubs will expel a member for unbecoming conduct. Well regulated society will not tolerate anything which would bring disgrace. Especially is this true about the army or military or state institutions. When anything is done unbecoming an officer, or even a private, discharge immediately follows.

But in a family, how every member is careful about the good name of the family. Many a criminal will hide his name and relationship to prevent any disgrace from coming to his parents or brothers



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or sisters. And, generally, evil inclined people have restrained their passions, in order not to bring disgrace on their relatives. They will tell you: "I could not steal or get drunk or indulge in lust or murder—Oh, I would not care so much for myself, but if my father knew it, if my mother found it out, it would break their hearts. My brothers and sisters would never look at me again; I could not face them. I belong to a good family; have very nice and respectable relations; they all would hate me for it." And should such a one fall, how he begs for God's sake not to let his folks know anything about it.

Even in case of marriage, when strong, natural and passionate feeling has made the hasty step which brings about a union not favored or approved by the parents, one of the parties being too far beneath the social standing of the other, or there is a great difference in religion, or one of the parties has done wrong, has been disgraced, how the parents condemn that step, if they find it out, and how exceedingly careful are those who got married to hide that marriage, because they are ashamed to acknowledge it.

Whenever the members of a respectable family discover any act of one of the members which is



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disgraceful, how the family pride is touched, and they all promise or swear to one another to hide it, to send the guilty one far away, to cover it so well, even to deny it, and gather up every plausible pretext of defense in order to save their good name.

Should the wrong done become known, should it appear in print, in other words, should the evidence of the bad act become undeniable, then how the other members of the family, with wounded family pride, tell the world that it is not the fault of the training he got; he was not taught such things at home; he always saw better example; he got a fine education; we never let him go, to our knowledge, into bad company; how he got that far is certainly a mystery to us, and he had no business to bring disgrace and shame on us.

Now, brethren, if it is the duty of every one of us to be careful about our conduct so as not to bring disgrace on our own, to live a life worthy of our parents and relatives, how much more is it our duty to live as the Apostle says, "a life worthy of God."

We belong to the family of Jesus Christ, and we should be more careful about bringing any disgrace

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on Him than we are in avoiding any dishonor or shame we might bring on our family in the relationship of flesh and blood.

What a sublime life we should live, as the Apostle says, "worthy of God," that is, supernatural in Jesus Christ, divine, so that it may be really worthy of God.

By our supernatural and divine life the whole world should see the difference between us and the non-Christian world. Can we not very easily see the difference between the educated and cultured and refined people and those who are uncouth and rough and vulgar?

Look at the former; they show that refinement and culture in their way of talking so correctly, so nicely, so gently; in their way of acting, so gentlemanly or lady-like. We may say that it is not only a pleasure, but an honor and a schooling for us to be in their company. We cannot help but admire them.

Now, beloved brethren, if some worldly and intellectual culture makes so strong an impression for good, what will a life worthy of God produce on all those who will come near us?

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Can any culture or refinement or education given by the world be compared with the culture and refinement which a Christian receives and acquires in being engrafted upon Christ, in being uplifted by Him unto God the Father? The culture of the Christian is divine—as far superior to that of this world as heaven is superior to earth. If there is any culture or refinement or so-called progress and civilization in this world, it was copied from the redemption of the Savior.

There is our standing, not social, but supernatural, and we who have received the fullness of God's grace should therefore make every effort to lead a life worthy of God. How we should be on our guard to practice privately and publicly the culture and education we have received from our Holy Mother, the Church, so that we shall be at all times a shining light, a thorough Christian, and as such, a true gentleman or a real lady.

Did I say to you that good parents feel it very keenly, and feel disgraced when their child marries without their knowledge and consent, especially when the partner of life is not suited and not fit company for their child?

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Do you think of the Church of Christ, of God your Father? How must they feel over the disgrace you bring on them when you dare marry without the knowledge and sanction and blessing of Mother Church. Is there not public scandal?

Oh, brethren, let me exhort you! Lead a life worthy of God, worthy of Jesus Christ, worthy of the Church, your mother, and your example will bring honor and glory to God, and your influence upon all those around you will be Christian, civilizing—in other words, your life will be worthy of God.









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